

AN
IMPARTIAL REPORT
OF THE
DEBATES

THAT OCCUR IN THE

TWO HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT,

In the Course of the Sixth Session of the Seventeenth Parliament
of Great Britain, called to meet at Westminster,
on Thursday the 19th of November, 1795.

WITH

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE RESPECTIVE SPEAKERS,

AND

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

INCLUDING COPIES OF ALL

STATE PAPERS, TREATIES, CONVENTIONS, &c.

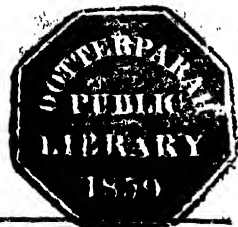
By WILLIAM WOODFALL,
AND ASSISTANTS.

VOL. I.

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1795.



TO THE PUBLIC.

WE hope we may congratulate our Readers on the appearances which the aspect of affairs, disastrous as they have been, has recently taken, and which we conceive promises a nearer prospect of Peace, than the continental occurrences of the year in its commencement gave reason to expect. It would be extremely idle, however, to forego that degree of patience, which a state of incertitude demands, and most of all, when matters appear to be drawing to a point, and when deliberation and decision should be inseparable companions. The general state of Europe and the known and openly avowed distresses of the French prove that Peace is indispensibly necessary to the repose of nations, and the general well-being of society, but much remains to be adjusted, before the grand object can be attained, and it must afford the most solid satisfaction to every Englishman for all the inconveniences he has felt, and must continue to feel, from the expences and losses of the war, that his Country has been found equal to all the difficulties of the occasion, that she has

large and untouched resources remaining, and can look the contest in the face, with the assurance of being able to bear its continuance with infinitely less dread of its effect on her finances than any one of the Powers engaged in it, as allies on either side the question, without taking the common enemy into consideration, who may almost be said to be gasping in the last agony of political existence as a great nation. France however from the natural fertility of her soil, her immense population, and a variety of powerful co-operative causes, possesses stronger springs and sources of reviviscence, than perhaps any country on the face of the European quarter of the globe can boast of. When the hour of Peace shall return to her, we heartily pray that the hour of good sense, of prudence, and of wisdom may return at the same time, and that she may learn the useful lesson that domestic tranquility and order, and good faith and good will to other countries are the best securities for the restoration of her agriculture, her commerce, her manufactures, her wealth, and her importance in the scale of nations.

Perhaps in the moment when popular licentiousness seems prone to lord it over liberty, and to bury freedom in the ruins of order and obedience to the laws, it may not be inopportune to recall to our readers recollection, that the free exercise of the press, was rescued

cued from the shackles it had long laboured under, by the firm and manly efforts of an individual, (the present Chamberlain of London) scarcely thirty years ago. Habitual exercise of authority, had at that period misled ministers into confounding the constitutional right of the subject with the power of Government, and to suppose that the latter was able to bear down all resistance; the spirit of Mr. Wilkes, the good sense and firmness of a British jury, and the integrity of a judge* whose memory will be revered by every man, who loves the Constitution of his country, taught Ministers their mistake, and gave back to the people, what was their original right, the knowledge of the conduct of their representatives through the medium of the press, and the full liberty of free discussion of all publick topics, where the manner was unmixed with libellous personality, and neither of a seditious nor treasonable tendency. Since the Revolution took place in France, and principles subversive of good order, religion, and the peace of Society were adopted on the other side of the water, and threatened to be forcibly introduced into every other Country in Europe, the Government of Great Britain have so anxiously endeavoured to prevent the influence of such principles, that some of their best friends have thought they went too far, and that their remedy ex-

ceeded

ceeded the degree of the danger. Be this as it may, it is evident from recent occurrences that their apprehensions did not carry them beyond the limits of necessary precaution. The contagion has spread, but to the credit of the people of this country, it has had little effect on the more intelligent of the community, and has chiefly made dupes of the ignorant, the infatuated and the uninformed—The members of both Houses of Parliament, who have taken the lead in opposition, have all of them disdained being classed with the converts of French principles, and been more loud in indignation, that such a charge should be urged against them, than in resistance of any other imputation whatever. The distinction taken by them on this point shews at once their judgment and their regard for the constitution. They have proved that they are anxiously zealous, like Mr. Wilkes, to exert its rights and contend for its freedom, under the authority of the Law, but that they will not for a moment countenance its abuse. Let us hope that the coming year will be at once the returning year of reason, humanity, and justice abroad, of peace, tranquility and solid happiness at home!

Nov. 7, 1795.

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of October

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WOODFALL, 1796

WOODFALL'S

PARLIAMENTARY REPORTS.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1

IN conformity to the Proclamation, published in the London Gazette of Saturday, September 19, the members of the two Houses of Parliament assembled in their respective chambers this day; and between two and three, his Majesty came down in the usual state, and being seated on the Throne, Sir Francis Molyneux, Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, was sent with a message to the Commons, requesting, in his Majesty's name, the immediate attendance of that Honourable House in the House of Peers; the Speaker left his chair, and went attended by the members to the Bar of their Lordships, when his Majesty was pleased to open the Session with the following most gracious Speech:

" *My Lords and Gentlemen,*

" It is a great satisfaction to Me to reflect, that, notwithstanding many events unfavourable to the common cause, the prospect resulting from the general situation of affairs has, in many important respects, been materially improved in the course of the present year.

" In *Italy*, the threatened invasion of the *French* has been prevented; and they have been driven back from a considerable part of the line of coast which they had occupied:—There is also reason to hope that the recent operations of the *Austrian* army have checked the progress which they had made on the side of *Germany*, and frustrated the offensive projects which they were pursuing in that quarter.

" The successes which have attended their military operations in other parts of the campaign, and the advantages which they have derived from the conclusion of separate treaties with some of the powers who were engaged in

the war, are far from compensating the evils which they experience from its continuance. The destruction of their commerce, the diminution of their maritime power, and the unparalleled embarrassment and distress of their internal situation, have produced the impression which was naturally to be expected; and a general sense appears to prevail throughout France, that the only relief from the increasing pressure of these difficulties must arise from the restoration of peace, and the establishment of some settled System of Government.

The distraction and anarchy which have so long prevailed in that country, have led to a crisis, of which it is as yet impossible to foresee the issue; but which must, in all human probability, produce consequences highly important to the interests of Europe. Should this crisis terminate in any order of things compatible with the tranquility of other countries, and affording a reasonable expectation of security and permanence in any treaty which might be concluded, the appearance of a disposition to negotiate for general peace on just and suitable terms will not fail to be met, on My part, with an earnest desire to give it the fullest and speediest effect. But I am persuaded you will agree with Me, that nothing is so likely to ensure and accelerate this desirable end, as to shew that We are prepared for either alternative, and are determined to prosecute the war with the utmost energy and vigour, until We have the means of concluding, in conjunction with Our Allies, such a peace as the justice of Our cause and the situation of the enemy may entitle Us to expect.

With this view I am continuing to make the greatest exertions for maintaining and improving Our naval superiority, and for carrying on active and vigorous operations in the West Indies, in order to secure and extend the advantages which we have gained in that quarter, and which are so nearly connected with Our commercial resources and maritime strength.

I rely with full confidence on the continuance of your firm and zealous support, on the uniform bravery of My fleets and armies, and on the fortitude, perseverance, and publick spirit of all ranks of My people.

The acts of hostility committed by the United Provinces, under the influence and control of France, have obliged Me to treat them as in a state of war with this country.

" The fleet which I have employed in the North Seas has received the most cordial and active assistance from the naval force furnished by the Empress of Russia, and has been enabled effectually to check the operations of the enemy in that quarter.

" I have concluded engagements of defensive alliance with the two Imperial Courts; and the ratifications of the Treaty of Commerce with the United States of America, which I announced to you last year, have now been exchanged. I have directed copies of these treaties to be laid before you.

" *Gentlemen of the House of Commons,*

" It is matter of deep concern to Me, that the exigencies of the publick service will require further additions to the heavy burthens which have been unavoidably imposed on My people. I trust that their pressure will, in some degree, be alleviated by the flourishing state of Our commerce and manufactures, and that Our expences, though necessarily great in their amount, will, under the actual circumstances of the war, admit of considerable diminution in comparison with those of the present year.

" *My Lords and Gentlemen,*

" I have observed for some time past with the greatest anxiety the very high price of grain, and that anxiety is increased by the apprehension that the produce of the wheat harvest in the present year may not have been such as effectually to relieve My people from the difficulties with which they have had to contend. The spirit of order and submission to the laws which, with very few exceptions, has manifested itself under this severe pressure, will, I am sure, be felt by you as an additional incentive to apply yourselves with the utmost diligence to the consideration of such measures as may tend to alleviate the present distress, and to prevent, as far as possible, the renewal of similar embarrassments in future. Nothing has been omitted on My part that appeared likely to contribute to this end; and you may be assured of My hearty concurrence in whatever regulations the wisdom of Parliament may adopt, on a subject so peculiarly interesting to My people, whose welfare will ever be the object nearest My heart."

As soon as his Majesty retired, the Marquis of Waterford in Ireland, was sworn and took his seat by the style and title of *Baron Tyrone*, and the *Earl of Hopetoun* being duly sworn took

took his seat as one of the sixteen Peers of Scotland, in the room of the late Lord Sommerville.

This ceremony over, no business was proceeded upon till half after five, there evidently appearing from the repeated consultation of his Majesty's ministers, that some very particular circumstance had occurred to occasion so extraordinary a delay. At length *Lord Grenville*, one of his Majesty's principal Secretaries of State, rose in his place and said,
* My Lords, before we begin——

When a hint being given to his Lordship from the table, strangers were desired to withdraw, and the bar was cleared.

Their Lordships then resolved themselves into a Committee of Privileges, when *Lord Grenville* informed their Lordships that the matter he had to submit to them previous to their proceeding to the consideration of his Majesty's most gracious Speech from the Throne, was such as he had no doubt would be thought to require their immediate attention, since it equally concerned the personal safety of the King, and the dignity and privileges of Parliament. Being informed that his Majesty's Speech from the Throne must be first disposed of, *Lord Grenville* moved, that it be taken into consideration the next day. His Lordship then briefly stated, that his Majesty had been grossly insulted in his way to the House, his state coach damaged, and an assault attempted on his Royal Person. An outrage, so indecent and unparalleled, demanded that their Lordships should take such necessary steps as to their wisdom should appear most fit, in order to manifest their zeal and attachment to his Majesty, their alarm for his danger and abhorrence for the authors of it, and their determination to adopt the most effectual means of bringing those treasonable persons to condign punishment, who forgetting the respect and reverence due to their Sovereign, had dared to violate the privilege of Parliament, to disregard its dignity, insult its honour, and to set the laws of their country at defiance.

The Earl of Westmoreland, (Master of the Horse, who from his office was necessarily attendant on his Majesty in his way to and from the House), stated to the House the particulars of the insult and outrage *, as far as they had fallen within his knowledge. *Lord*

* The particulars of this indecent and scandalous outrage are thus stated in the publications of the day.

His Majesty accompanied by the Earl of Westmoreland and Lord Onslow, (the one Master of the Horse, the other a Lord of the Bed-chamber) with his usual attendants, went in state to the House of Peers, escorted by two troops of horse

Lord Onslow, (a Lord of the Bed-chamber) confirmed the report made by the Earl of Westmoreland.

The Journals having been previously consulted by his Majesty's ministers, in order to find a precedent, which might by a sort of analogy, suggest a proper mode of proceeding in a case so new and unexpected, the following Address was proposed, to be followed by a conference with the other House to desire them to concur in the said Address.

*The Humble ADDRESS * of the Right Honourable the LORDS Spiritual and Temporal, and COMMONS in Parliament assembled.*

Die Veneris, 30 Octobris 1795.

"Most Gracious Sovereign,

"WE, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects,
"the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in Par-

liament assembled, your Majesty's humble petitioners, shew, that your Majesty's household troops, the Horse-guards and a file of musqueteers. The concourse of people who attended on this occasion was astonishingly great. As the procession proceeded from St. James's, most of the multitude expressed their loyalty and attachment to his Majesty; but many loudly vociferated "*No War, No War! give us Peace and Bread!*"

On arriving at the Horse-guards, the gates were turned on the populace, and many hundreds were shut into the Park; but this precaution did not prevent outrage, for, in Parliament-street, the mob insulted his Majesty with the most indecorous and unbecoming language, and nearly opposite the Ordnance Office, in Palace-yard, a round stone or bullet was shot into the coach, supposed from an ur-gun by some villain, which broke one of the panes of glass, but happily did no other damage, though the Earl of Westmoreland narrowly escaped being struck by it.

On his Majesty's return, he experienced the same criminal and reprehensible treatment; and the mob becoming very riotous, the Earl of Harrington gave orders for the troops to patrol the Park, during which time the King set off in his family coach to Buckingham-house, when the rabble, about half way down the Mall, endeavoured to force open the door of the carriage; the King, seeing the danger he was in, called to the footmen, who beckoned to the guards; the horse immediately galloped down the Park, rescued his Majesty from the mob, and escorted him to Buckingham house, where they continued to vent their abuse till dispersed by the military.

His Majesty, amidst the furious storm, supported himself on the alarming occasion with a manly fortitude, which could have proceeded only from a mind so pure and virtuous.

The mob finding their purposes frustrated, wreaked their revenge on the state coach, by breaking the windows, and demolishing the figures on the top of that elegant vehicle. The damage which they did to is estimated at two hundred pounds.

* Which was presented to his Majesty at St. James on Saturday, when his Majesty was pleased to return the following answer.

"My Lords and Gentlemen,

"I receive with great pleasure the attestation of your uniform zeal and loyalty. I have to return to you the assurance of the affectionate and steady attachment of Myself and family to have felt any other sentiment upon this occasion than that of concern at the violation of the laws. I shall not fail to give such directions as may best tend to bring to justice and punishment the persons concerned in an offence so dangerous to the public tranquillity, and so injurious to our excellent Constitution."

"Liament

liament assembled, beg leave to approach your Majesty, humbly to express to your Majesty our indignation and abhorrence at the daring outrages offered to your Majesty's passage to and from your Parliament. We cannot reflect without the utmost concern, that there should be found within your Majesty's dominions any persons so insensible of the happiness which all your Majesty's subjects derive from Majesty's just and mild Government, and of the virtues which so eminently distinguish your Majesty's character, as to be capable of these flagitious acts. And we beg leave humbly to lay before your Majesty the earnest wishes of your faithful Lords and Commons, in which we are confident we shall be joined by all descriptions of your Majesty's subjects, that you will be graciously pleased to direct the most effectual measures to be taken, without delay, to discover the authors and abettors of crimes so atrocious."

A slight conversation took place on this proposition, of which the following is said * to be the purport.

The Marquis of Lansdown, Earl Moira, the Duke of Bedford, and Lord Lauderdale bore a part in this discussion.

The Marquis of Lansdown animadverted with severity and acrimony upon the conduct of ministers, whom he discredited and reprobated upon this occasion. He believed, on his part, that it was no more than the counter-part of their own plot; the alarm-bell, to terrify the people into weak compliances. He thought it was a scheme planned and executed by ministers themselves, for the purpose of continuing their power, a power which drew the Constitution into their own hands, and which he would not consider as safely lodged while in their possession.

In the course of the conversation several points were urged, which from misapprehension by one Lord or other, rendered explanation necessary, and it was accordingly given, as occasion required by Lord Grenville and others.

Four witnesses of the transaction that had passed in the course of the outrage, viz. Mr. Walford, of Pallmall; Mr. Stockdale, Bookseller, Piccadilly; one of his Majesty's footmen; and Kennedy, belonging to the Office in Bow-street, were severally examined at the Bar of the House.

The examination being closed, a message was sent to the Commons requesting an immediate conference. After some little delay, the Commons sent messengers to their Lordships,

* Strangers were excluded the whole of the day, after the Bar had been cleared.

to inform them, that previous to their being able to return a satisfactory answer to their Lordships, it was necessary that their Lordships should state the subject, on which they desired a conference. This reply occasioned some discussion, which ended in its being resolved, that a second message be sent, stating, "That the Lords desired a present conference with the Commons, on a subject which involved the safety of his Majesty's sacred person, and the dignity and honour of Parliament."

To this Message the Commons agreed, and managers being appointed on their part the conference took place in the Painted Chamber. *The Earl of Mansfield* (Lord President) Chief Manager for the Lords, stated the nature of the evidence they had received, and the amount of the proof.

The conference over, the Commons returned to their House, and the Lords to their Chamber of Parliament, where they soon put an end to their sitting of the day by agreeing to a motion of adjournment.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THURSDAY, October 29.

When the Commons returned from the House of Lords after having read the bill for the prevention of clandestine outlawries a first time, *pro forma*, the *Speaker* informed the House that his Majesty had delivered a most gracious Speech from the Throne, a copy of which he had procured, and would read to the House. After the new members had taken their seats, his Majesty's most gracious Speech was read from the Chair, when

The Earl of Dalkeith (son to the Duke of Buccleugh) rose, and after apologizing for his own inadequacy to step forward on so important an occasion, said, with the indulgence of the House he would state his reasons for moving an Address in answer to his Majesty's most gracious Speech from the Throne, an Address which he thought the situation of the country, the circumstances of the war, and the paternal affection of his Majesty for his people expressed in his Speech all demanded. Notwithstanding the success with which it had been attended, and the acquisitions that had been gained, he could not but consider his Majesty well warranted in feeling the satisfaction he expressed at the improved aspect of affairs. In order to shew that he did not hazard this opinion lightly, he desired the House calmly and considerately to weigh

weight the occurrences of the war, to view the losses the Allies had suffered in the course of the War, which had induced them to abandon the confederacy, and to conclude a peace with the French Republic. On the Continent the French had certainly gained considerable advantages, but they were pretty equally balanced by the losses in other quarters. In the East Indies our successes had been uniform, uninterrupted, and highly important. In the West Indies indeed our prosperity had neither been so encouraging nor so conspicuous, though upon the whole he considered affairs in that quarter as abundantly favourable, and the prospect promising. The commanders, by whom the expeditions had been conducted, he held in the highest respect, and their merit had justly received the approbation of that House. It was natural to expect, from the unparalleled extent of our commerce, that it would be exposed to occasional losses. Yet, compared with the trade we had to protect, the loss was trivial. The commerce of the enemy was utterly annihilated, and, while they might be occasionally successful in their depredations upon ours, it was impossible that such losses could be compensated by reprisals, when the enemy had no trade left for us to annoy. The present powerful armament destined to the West Indies, and the high reputation and talents of the leaders, to whom the enterprise was confided, afforded reason to expect the most brilliant and important advantages.

His Lordship next adverted to the peculiar nature of the War. It was a contest in which every thing was to be effected by exertion. Nothing was to be hoped in the view of a peace, from the influence of reason, policy, or humanity, upon the conduct of the enemy, who looked only to the events of war, and were governed altogether by the turn of victory and the casualty of success. It was necessary, he said, to impress them with a conviction of their inability to accomplish the criminal projects they had formed, and he was confident that a disgraceful peace would be more mortifying to the pride of Englishmen, than all the evils they could suffer from the most disastrous war. The new constitution of France was obviously aimed at the attainment of particular purposes. It was not calculated to secure the interests and the tranquillity of foreign powers. The present moment, therefore, was most improper for negotiation. He was not sure that the new plan of Government met the approbation of the French people. The decree for the re-election of two-thirds, generally known to be extremely obnoxious, and as it had

had been necessary to employ the army devoted to the Convention, to enforce its execution, the whole appeared to him no other than a military government.

It was even still doubtful to which party the victory would fall. The distraction and anarchy in which France had been involved, was still the same. The man who since the overthrow of Robespierre had been thought to regulate their affairs, had been denounced, and the issue was yet uncertain: in short, nothing seemed to indicate a return of a stable and permanent government. He concluded with moving an Address to his Majesty.

The Honourable Mr. *Stewart*, who rose to second the Address, began with declaring that he would not trespass upon that indulgence with which young speakers were commonly favoured. After several handsome compliments to Lord Dalkeith on the able manner in which he had moved the Address, he first took a view of the leading features of the war, and the original grounds of justice and necessity upon which it had been undertaken. Much of his argument was aimed at illustrating the idea first expressed in his Majesty's Speech, viz. that since the last year the situation of public affairs was improved. In examining the state of France it was clear, Mr. *Stewart* said, that her finances and her energy were nearly exhausted. She had derided the extraordinary vigour which she had displayed from the operation of the system of terror. Her expences were enormous, and could not long be supported. The means of raising supplies were to the disbursements exactly in the ratio of seventy to one. Were it necessary for them to raise twenty millions for the expence of the current year, a moderate supposition, considering the extent of their establishment, the sum must be twenty multiplied by seventy. This was proved by their own speeches, their own reports made from their Committees to the Convention, and consequently from authority. So great was the discredit of their paper currency, that the Convention had decreed the recal of the assignats, while from their total want of all commerce and manufactures, it was impossible that specie could be procured. The system by which Robespierre, the chief French statesman, and by which he governed was founded upon cruelty and terror. The present measures he considered as guided pretty nearly by the same principles, and possessing much of the same character. The severities which had prevailed under the former were exercised under the present rulers, upon those who had first supported and afterwards assisted in overthrowing it. He

adduced the instance of Barrere and his associates, and the practice of condemning men by military, instead of revolutionary tribunals, both of which were equally repugnant to a government that affected to ground itself on the principles of freedom, equality, and justice. He confessed that the last campaign had not been distinguished by brilliant success. Our exertions, however, had been usefully employed. The war had forced the enemy to adopt unjustifiable means for the support of an unjustifiable system. Yet this system necessarily tended to exhaust itself, and to weaken them by the victories it enabled them to obtain. Their incapacity to injure was our best guarantee, and to this point by our exertions we had reduced, and were still contributing to reduce them.

Distressing, as it was, to see the necessity of additional burthens, it was Mr. Stewart said, a consolation to perceive our resources unimpaired. No where were the people deprived of the comforts of life, by the effects of the War—no where were they even oppressed. Monied men were readily found to lend upon favourable terms, the sums necessary for the expences of government; the next budget would, he hoped, shew that there were still many good subjects of taxation, while those of last year could not be called burthensome to the people, and it afforded a pleasing and a consolatory reflection, that the taxes we already felt, and the national debt, great as it was, were in a state of liquidation.

This favourable view of our situation he believed the opposite side of the House, disposed as they were to dwell upon our disasters, would not venture to contradict. The defection of some of our Allies from the general cause he lamented, but if we regarded their conduct as treacherous and disgraceful, it would ill become us to select it for a model of imitation. There was, however, some argument to be urged in their justification. They had made peace not merely compelled to it by disasters, but when the principles of the French Government were changed, when her system of conquest, and of intermeddling in the affairs of foreign states was abandoned, when the frontier of the enemy on one side, and having a dangerous friend on the other, their existence, as it was dangerous to all treaties, was endangered. Such was the situation of the Hanoverian dominions, and he hoped that no serious argument would be raised by the opposite side of the House, on the conduct of the Elector of Hanover. Such a case might be a proper subject for a debate, but not for a declamation at Copenhagen-house.

house, but it was unworthy a real statesman. The different situation of Hanover and of this country, pointed out the different politics we had to pursue. Fortune, and not the arms of France, Mr. Stewart said, had conquered Holland. The slowness with which the new principles operated, was a proof of the dislike in which they were held by many, and of the short possession they would probably obtain of that country. To our navy much attention had obviously been paid, and to the diversion made upon the Continent, the power of our employing it to the best advantage was chiefly ascribable. Never in fact had the arms of Britain been more fortunate by sea. In every important station—the Mediterranean, the East and West Indies, we were masters. The present armament to the latter would in all probability secure us so large a share in the Colonies as would compensate in a great measure for the extensive acquisition of territory by the French armies. He approved of the principle of the war, and said he reposed the most unlimited confidence in the Right Honourable Chancellor of the Exchequer, that he would embrace the earliest opportunity of making peace. Had the Right Honourable Gentleman, he said, pledged himself to negotiate with any particular form of Government in France, when pressed by the opposite side of the House, he should have considered him as unworthy of his confidence. He protested, that he believed him, however, to be actuated by no interested motives, and he trusted that he would be guided by no precipitate views. Anxiety and eagerness for peace would not, he hoped, allow our efforts to be broken, and he declared, he confidently expected that the period would arrive, when we might look back to the exertions we had made, as having been employed not less in preserving the safety of our country, than in contributing to the general security of Europe.

Mr. Sheridan after waiting a second or two, and observing that no member was disposed to rise, said, he was not surprised at the dumb astonishment with which the speech was received, if the contents were anticipated by the full instantaneous that occurred in it. He was indeed surprised to find that the first word of the speech was the word *satiation*. As the speech, not of the King, but of the minister, he would exercise his constitutional right as a Member of Parliament and examine it freely. To be satisfied with every thing had been esteemed a mark of piety and christian resignation. In this view the present ministers were the most pious men in the world. They were surprised with the improvement

provement of our situation since last year. It was stated that a check had been received in Italy, but it was not remembered, that, at the period alluded to the Republicans had not penetrated into Italy. It was likewise said, and though he sincerely hoped it was true, he took it for granted, upon no other authority than that of a French newspaper, that the army upon the Rhine had been forced to retire. The army of the Rhine, however, had not last year crossed the Rhine, and now they were only prevented from advancing to the Danube, and obliged to limit their progress to the German side of the Rhine. We were now at war with Holland, since last year, which might likewise be thought by his Majesty's ministers to contribute to the improvement of our situation. The King of Prussia, after having cheated this nation, had Mr. Sheridan said, been vindicated by the Noble Lord, on the plea, that he was justified by the necessity of his circumstances. Spain too, had now forsaken the confederacy, and produced an improvement in our situation, and encreased the satisfaction of the minister. In the West Indies we had at one time three islands, which were now reduced to two. From the scarcity with which we were threatened formerly, there was now an acknowledged famine. He was astonished how such words could be inserted in the speech, and pronounced by his Majesty with a smile of conscious triumph, at the very moment when he was carried through the midst of his starving, dejected, and even sorry (said Mr. Sheridan) am I to hear it, beset with his irritated, clamorous subjects. The prospect of peace, he said, was now more distant than ever. In the speech of the session before last, it was said, "that a continuation of our efforts, " was necessary to bring the object of the war to a successful termination," and at the conclusion of last session hopes were raised "of such a state of order and regular government as might be capable of supporting the intentions of amity and peace." Now it is said, that next year will produce events of which it is impossible to foresee the consequences, like the predictions of the Almanack-maker, who announces events of which all Europe will be the witness. Jealousies, Mr. Sheridan observed, were commonly entertained of the introduction of Hanoverian troops into this country, but he declared, that he should have no objection to import the whole Hanoverian Council, and install them in the offices of his Majesty's present ministers. They might advise him to adopt measures which no arguments or events can recommend to those who now regulate his councils. That

virtuous

virtuous lady, the Empress of Russia, it is likewise said, has sent her fleet to the North Seas, but it is to eat English meat and to learn the English discipline, not to afford a cordial co-operation in any professed object of the war. It had been said that general discontent would produce some change in the situation of the affairs of France. If sufferings and calamity contributed to produce any practical improvement in the constitution of a country, he wished the principle to be applied to ourselves. And if a state of misery, and famine, and discontent were the guides to a better order of things, the people of England were in the high road of its attainment!

The commitment of the West Indies appeared to him to infer the utmost criminality in the conduct of ministers. He said that the fleet ought to have sailed six weeks ago, instead of which he was certain, that it could not set sail for at least a fortnight, perhaps for three weeks longer. It had been remarked by an Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Stewart), that the ministers acted upon no principles, and for this reason they merited his confidence. It must be confessed indeed, Mr. Sheridan said, that they discovered no fixed principles in the conduct of their plans, or in the choice of the objects of their exertions. An Honourable Secretary of State, he meant of the War, not of the Sinecure Department, had boasted that the expedition to the West Indies was a favourite. This Honourable Gentleman was no kinsman, he was one of those who wished to obtain the valuable acquisition, and had no objection to lay hold of an island to swell the number of our colonies. A young man (Mr. Jenkinson), more sanguine in the cause of the emigrants and of monarchy, proposed to march directly to Paris. He wished to strike at the heart of the Republic, while the Allies only struck at the extremity. He would have fastened on the core, they only rubbed at the rind. Instead of assailing the capital, they only braved the chiefs of Normontier and Poitou. These disastrous expeditions where the wretched emigrants were left to the vengeance of their incensed countrymen, however, seemed to awaken no sentiments of English pride or resentment. It was not indeed, said Mr. Sheridan, British blood which flowed, but it was British honour which bled at every pore, and the murderous enterprizes must one day "sit heavy on the souls" of the authors of them.

We were, however, determined to save the islands, and a desperate effort was to be made, for his part, he had not the heart to survey the gloom in which affairs are involved. In Martinique there was only one regiment of effective men, while

while the nominal force was six regiments. He entertained great doubts of the policy of enlarging too much our West India possessions, which could only serve to drain what we could least spare—men. 15,000 troops had been landed in St. Domingo, from whence 1,500 were sent to Grenada, of which, in four months, 14 officers and 400 men were lost. They were stuffed into hospitals in the most deplorable situation, and by the most unaccountable negligence in one department or other, were deprived of the aid both of medicines and surgeons. From the most culpable inattention to the providing of necessary transports, 90 instead of 40, Mr. Sheridan said, were put on board each ship, without the possibility of accommodation, and the death of the many who perished in this shocking manner ought justly to be imputed to the conduct of Administration.

It was in vain to connect the possibility of negotiation with any new occurrences, and to make it dependent on so many events. Unless for the purpose of protecting our trade, he could not vote a shilling of the money of the people for the prosecution of the war. This pretence, he said, was of more consequence than the whole of the speech, as it shewed that the object of this contest was to restore the unqualified despotism of France. He considered the ministers, who in the days of Charles II, when that weak monarch was the prisoner of France, not more guilty of treason than the minister who should export the treasure of this country in replacing upon the throne of France the family of Bourbon, the natural enemies of Britain. We, on our side of the House, continued Mr. Sheridan, have told you before, to do as the King of Prussia had done; find out what government the French armies obey, under whose command and controul they beat the world, and negotiate with them: we have told you to do as Spain had done, we now tell you to do as the Elector of Hanover has done.

Mr. Sheridan adverted to the Declaration of Louis XVIII. He had suspicions in his own mind, that it was in the heart of ministers to act up to the spirit of this Declaration, and to establish, if possible, the old unequalled system of despotism in France. Against such an object he must make his stand, as far as it might go. To the support or increase of the naval force for the defence of Great Britain and her commerce, he would willingly give his hearty support, but to establish the purpose of Louis XVIII. he would not give a shilling of his constituents' money, if it were even as it was suspected, that the heads

of that Proclamation were penned in this country, with the concurrence and under the direction of ministers; and that in conjunction with Louis XV. they wished to advise his Majesty to exhaust the treasures, and spill the blood of the country to restore the ancient tyranny of the French monarchy, they deserved to lose their heads. This he had before roundly asserted, and he would now repeat it; in his mind, the minister who advised Charles the Second to enter into the pay of France, was not a greater traitor to his country than our present minister, if he had acted as was suspected. Why were the race of Stuarts expelled from this country, but because they entered into a league with France? and could any league be more destructive to this country than one with the House of Bourbon, who have been the uniform and inveterate enemies of Great Britain, its liberty, and its commerce? No association with the Republic, could be so destructive to our interests; for never were there worse neighbours on earth than the French during their monarchies. It was certainly possible, that the conclusions which he had made in his own mind, might be erroneous; but, as far as he could judge of the spirit of their intentions, from the prevarication of ministers, he believed that they were simply watching for an opportunity of effecting a counter-revolution for the establishment of monarchy, and placing Louis upon his throne. This he believed was the real view of ministers; and however other pretences may be made use of to delude the people, or satisfy the qualms of some scrupulous adherents, he could not but think they were the true causes of delaying the restoration of peace to these kingdoms. Mr. Sheridan concluded by saying, that he would not move any amendment to an Address which he disapproved of *in toto*; however, if any gentleman should propose an amendment, which would embrace three plain points, he would have no objection to vote for it; first, "That we could no longer burthen our constituents with taxes to support the delusive and unattainable views of ministers in the restoration of monarchy, or until some form of government should be established in France, which they may not imagine to be incapable of maintaining the accustomed relations of amity and peace." Secondly, "That a strict inquiry should be instituted into the conduct of ministers in the prosecution of the war, and into the causes of the unexampled calamities which have every where attended it." And, thirdly, "That the most speedy or instant means should be taken for putting an end

end to the war, by declaring a willingness to treat with the rulers of France."

Mr. Jenkinson rose next and said, that he could not but consider the present moment as extremely improper for negotiation. "An anxiety to impress the House with the necessity of immediate negotiation would only serve to retard peace, and to raise the demands of our enemies. He considered that there were various important causes of justice and expediency in which the war originated. The navigation of the Scheldt, the insults offered by the French nation to every civilized government, and their zeal in the propagation of their opinions. The conduct of the war, he said, was to be defended by examining the extent of its success in repelling the dangers it was meant to obviate. This was to be done in two ways; either by the effect which the war might produce upon the sentiments of the people of the interior, or by the pressure of an external force effecting a change in their inclinations and temper. He justified his former declaration respecting a direct march of the allied army to Paris, declaring that the overthrow of the French government was not so chimerical as the Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Sheridan) inferred by his allusion. General Dumourier, whose character as a military man gives weight to his opinion, had declared himself convinced of the practicability of the scheme, and its defeat was certainly in a great measure occasioned by the want of fidelity and of exertion upon the part of the Allies. He contended, however, that considerable success had been gained; though the former of the two objects had failed, the latter seemed to have succeeded. The situation of the people of France in the end of 1793 was different, he observed, from that of the present period. In 1793, they were furious in their profusion of the doctrines of equality, of the rights of man, and of unlimited right of election, and zealous in their propagation. They had now much abated their vehemence of argument, and expressed their sentiments with more moderation, more reason, and more candour. The principles of the new constitution, studiously repudiate the former chimera, and fix civil government upon more reasonable foundations. The plan of this constitution became likewise more agreeable to reason, experience, and policy. Should this plan be reduced to practice the objection to its fluctuating nature of the government, would be removed. That we have succeeded in repelling the danger with which we were threatened, Mr. Jenkinson said, was undeniable.

From

From the great efforts and important successes which marked the commencement of the war, various royalist insurrections took place. From these one of three alternatives was to have been expected, either, that the enemy would have been unable to oppose the Allies, that a counter-revolution would have been effected, or that a civil war would have burst forth. Unfortunately, said he, for France, for Europe, and for humanity, the system of terror and of Robespierre, built upon the rights of man, was introduced.

That the war was not the cause of that system gaining ground, he contended was obvious and undeniable. It was clear that it owed its credit to its delusive charms, and fascinating influence over the minds of the people, who never reason. By degrees they felt its miseries. In the dawn of returning reason, they submitted to the power which freed them from the oppression under which they had groined, and which, in its turn, in due time he had no doubt they would remove. The war, he said, tended to abridge the duration of that system and of the miseries it produced in France.

The opinions borrowed from the wild and frantic declarations of French orators, which had been propagated and maintained in this country, gave serious ground of alarm. All ranks of men were justified in associating for the purpose of expressing their disapprobation of these doctrines, and their detestation of them must have led to hostility. Such opinions, could not have been compromised with safety to the Constitution. The war, therefore, was every way necessary to the nation. The determination of France to retain Holland was likewise, he said, an insuperable obstacle to an immediate peace. The independence she offered was merely nominal. The States she called independent must have always been subject to her controul, and ruled by her intrigues. No man would deny, that it was an object of infinite importance, he said, to prevent France gaining so large an extent of coast as the superiority of Holland and the Netherlands afforded. Possessing the whole coast from Bayonne to the Weser, she might in peace usurp our commerce, and in war distress us by her cruizers, and be enabled by the increase of her naval strength to oppose not only strength to strength, but strength to our weakness. The remedy therefore, for her enormous acquisitions, was he conceived, to endeavour to obtain in another quarter something to exchange or to compensate. It would, he said, be highly unwise to enter upon immediate negotiation, when a few months might place us in a situation to treat with greater advantage. In the beginning

of this war he acknowledged that the restoration of the Emigrants, and of the Monarchy of France were objects that he equally wished and expected, considering them, as he had done, as objects of infinite importance to the country, and therefore deserving of being attained by war. Were it possible still to restore them, he would consider it as a fair subject of war. Though he was one who thought that object still a little probable, he saw no probability of its final success. He concluded with giving his hearty concurrence to the Address.

Mr. Maurice Robinson said a few words against the Address.

General Tarleton observed that he received no satisfaction from his Majesty's speech, no satisfaction from the Noble Earl who moved the Address, nor any from the Honourable Gentleman who seconded that motion. The whole afforded to him but a melancholy prospect of the situation of this country, and he could as confidently declare, that he had received no consolation whatever from the Right Honourable Gentleman who had divided his speech into so many distinct branches, although his opinions were sanctioned by the concurrence of General Dumourier. That General, it was true, possessed great ability and penetration, yet it was not possible that he should be acquainted with every circumstance. He declined following the Right Honourable Gentleman through his subsequent speculations, as he conceived them to be nugatory and ridiculous.

Reverting to his Majesty's speech, he observed, that it commenced with a statement of success, arising from the prevention of the projected invasion of Italy; but to what did this amount? Let us turn our eyes to the southern armies, and we should find that those troops which had been hitherto employed under General Kellerman against Spain, would now be probably drafted from the Pyrenees, to reinforce the armies of the Alps; and notwithstanding the exultations upon the retreat of the French to the Rhine, he suspected there was little to console us in that quarter. A loan of 4,500,000*l.* had been granted to his Imperial Majesty to co-operate with us in a more powerful degree, and what had been the consequent energy, what was his present situation, and what his future hopes? Instead of having taken Luxembourg, and secured it with an Austrian garrison, while his troops made further progress into the interior of France, they had been obliged to pass beyond the Rhine, and were now situated beyond it.

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From what we are able to deduce from antecedent concurrences, from the documents of books and the records of history, as well as our own experience, it has always been believed that the further an army penetrates through a great length of country the more its force is weakened and its numbers diminished; yet notwithstanding this self-evident axiom, armies have been induced by repeated conquests to extend their ingressions, until convinced of their temerity by some unexpected disaster, though of trifling import. Why might not General Jourdan, with his army of 200,000 men, have acted in a similar manner? or why might he not have received notice of the treachery which began to manifest itself at Paris, and therefore resolve to retrench his operations, and retire to abide the probable events, and act as necessity and circumstances should prompt him. Either of these alternatives would as well account for the impediment in his progress as the cause laid down.

He next reviewed the situation of the West Indies, which his Honourable Friend (Mr. Sheridan) had dwelt upon with his usual information, although it were possible that the multiplicity of his enquiries might not enable him to speak with such precision on this subject as a military man. The General indulged very faint hopes of the expedition; which, if it had already failed, he feared would not arrive in time to complete its purpose, or if it should be able to effect any thing, he imagined that it would not accomplish more than what had been before accomplished by Sir Charles Grey. If the conquest of St. Domingo were designed, the attempt would be nugatory and absurd, for that place was too populous and too strong, and too well defended; to surrender on any easy conditions. Indeed, in his opinion, it would be as easy to conquer the United States of America as St. Domingo, but if any thing should happen, of course he should be agreeably surprised.

When he looked to the western coast of France, he discovered nothing but defeats there, from the Loire to the ocean, and regretted when he considered the force and number of men employed, that the diversion at Quiberon had not been conducted in a military manner. He thought the Commander should have first taken possession of the battery, and afterwards, when he found it necessary to retreat, should have adopted some means for withdrawing the men, and not have landed them so rashly to leave them in the first moment of alarm.

If ministers had any part in the weakness and infamy of that transaction, he should exclaim in the words of the Poet,

"If you consent unto ~~that weak agreement~~,
 "The end left so woe, which the spider spins,
 "Would serve to hang thee!"

He then commented on the present scarcity, and the neglect of the notice which his Honourable friends had previously given, that such a calamity was to be apprehended. Great supplies however, they were told, were expected from abroad, though of the real benefit derived from those great supplies, there had not yet been any solid proof; poverty and distress were marching hand in hand, and no early period of relief appeared. No man with the least regard to philosophical enquiry could be surprised at the scarcity, when he recollected that millions of men were formerly employed in agriculture, who since the war have of necessity been otherwise engaged. In Brabant, on the borders of the Rhine, and the fertile fields of Poland, this was incontrovertibly the case, and cultivation was no longer encouraged. Hence it was palpable that the importation of corn to other parts of Europe had decreased with the supplies for their own consumption, and thus the scarcity became proportionately universal.

In regard to Spain, whose ports were open to us, and whose navies were sailing under our flag, she had thought proper, at last, to acknowledge the French Republic, and as a barrier against any future aggression on the part of England, had very prudently, assigned St. Domingo to the French, another ally, the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel, who had trafficked in carnage and in gore, had shaken hands with them, and left us to continue the war, and ruin France by ourselves. What should we think of a man who ruined himself by going to law purposely to ruin his neighbour, or of him who to ruin his antagonist through the body, receives a mortal wound himself? The case was exactly parallel, when we flattered ourselves with the approaching ruin of France, for in that ruin we became ourselves involved. Away then with such sophistry, away with such delusion, away with all the agents of a corrupt and profligate administration. Will the House of Commons listen any longer to these miserable manufacturers of war? From our first disgrace in Flanders, to our present unhappy state of the contest with France, he would be bold to assert that we had suffered one continued series

series of misfortune, except in the instance of a few negative successes, and this he was both ready and willing to dispute, although in such an infirm state, being afflicted with the gout. A justly incensed enemy would not give terms whenever we are pleased to demand them, nor could we expect it; perhaps they might not even consent to the measures we propose, and then we must recur to a new system, appoint new ministers, and adopt an energy suitable to our embarrassments. He could not think the House would abandon Englishmen, and therefore, if we went on retreating and refining, we must have other councils and other men to prop up the falling state.

Mr. Buxton congratulated the country, that the Speech of his Majesty at last held out the prospect of Peace, and when the period arrived for negotiation he trusted that ministers would not let it escape. Respecting the high price of corn, he thought the Honourable Gentleman incorrect in attributing it wholly to the war, as we had unfortunately had two very unproductive seasons, but he hoped the House would turn its attention to this subject, and that every measure would be taken to redress it.

Mr. Fox said, that after hearing the Ministry's Speech, as read to them by the Speaker, from the Chair, and after hearing the arguments which had been advanced for the Address which had been moved upon the Speech, he should not feel that he did his duty to his constituents and his country, if he were to give a silent vote. He had little to add to what his Honourable Friend (*Mr. Sheridan*) had said on the surprise which the first insulting paragraph of his Majesty's Speech must excite in the bosom of every man; and with the old times of spirit and energy that distinguished the people of this country, would have drawn upon the ministers, who were the authors of it, indignation and punishment. He said insulting paragraph, for it was not enough to say, that they should with impunity persist for three years together in the prosecution of a war for miserable pecuniary gain, it was not enough to add one hundred millions of loss to the capital, to load the people with four millions per annum of permanent taxes—it was not enough to grind the poor and unhappy people of this country in such a manner as to make almost every man of them feel the misfortune of scarcity and want; but they must also be insulted, by putting into his Majesty's mouth, in the very first paragraph of his Speech, the impudent falsehood, that their situation was improved. How was their situation improved? In what circumstances were the affairs

affairs of this country bettered since the last year? Were they improved from the recent success of the Austrian army? His success, whatever it might be, and of which he believed, Ministers had not themselves any very perfect account, was not an improvement, in comparison with the last year, but in comparison with the last week; and surely it could not be called an improvement of our situation, since last year the French were not in possession of a foot of territory beyond the Rhine. That they might be forced to retreat was possible, and perhaps it was possible that in comparison with the disasters which were expected from the continuance of their successful career, this retreat might be construed into an improvement, but that it should come from his Majesty's Ministers, who had prevailed on Parliament to guarantee to Austria, a loan of four millions and a half which were to procure positive conquest on the part of Austria, was somewhat curious. They had told Parliament that, from the various points of contest between the Austrian dominion and France, the Emperor was capable of seriously wounding her, if assisted by this country; and upon these representations, the House was prevailed upon to become the guarantor of this enormous loan. Now what was the issue of these representations? Instead of Austria having been able to penetrate into any part of the French dominions, or to wound them in any one point, they were told that it was an improvement of their situation, that the French had recently been forced to retreat from posts of which they were not in possession at the time of the guarantee. Was it an improvement in our situation, that they had extended their dominion beyond the Rhine, that Mannheim had fallen into their hands, and that the greater part of the Palatinate had also been over-run? It was, surely an insult on the understandings of Englishmen, to say that in this quarter of the war, there was an improvement in our situation. The check given to the French in Italy was also introduced as a matter of triumph; that is, because the French had not succeeded in all their extent of operations, and because they were not masters of every part of the countries they had invaded, the situation of Great Britain was improved. Or did Ministers mean to insinuate that in a general comparison of the situation of the two countries, our state was better than last year. It had been often said by himself and others, in the course of the last Session of Parliament, that there was great reason to apprehend a scarcity of corn in the Kingdom, and that it was worthy the consideration of Ministers before they pressed for the continuance of a loan that

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that necessarily encreased the consumption, to see that the country was plentifully supplied with the necessaries of life. This observation was treated with the most lofty disdain, and in a tone of insolent and haughty indignation, the suggestion was imputed to a factious spirit, which sought to raise an unnecessary alarm in the minds of men; and at a later period of the Session, when an Honourable and respectable Member (Mr. Hussey), urged the same forcible persuasive against war, upon information as to the quantity of grain in the country, which he had obtained with care, he was rebuked for throwing out the suggestion, as being utterly unfounded in fact. How had the event turned out? That these warnings had been most lamentably verified it was not necessary for him, he believed, now to state, nor would it be alleged, that, in this particular, our internal situation was improved. Improved! Good God! when we were reduced to such a point of misery, that, looking into the situation of the common labourer from one end of the country to the other, it was a melancholy and a heart-breaking fact, that not one man out of ten was able by his labour to earn sufficient bread for himself and his family! Oh, but it seemed that France was reduced to a situation of unparalleled distress. And this was held out to the people of Great Britain as a matter of consolation to them. He would not quarrel about the word unparalleled distress; it might be so, but he must advert on the strange logic which was used upon the occasion, for the people of this country were to be told that this unparalleled distress of the French was owing entirely to the war; whereas the distresses of England had nothing on earth to do with it! How such a difference could exist in the operation of the war it was not for him to divine. That in France all their scarcity, all their calamities were to be imputed to it, but that in England the war had no effect whatever on our internal situation. If the people of this country had so thoroughly surrendered their understandings to the eloquence of Ministers as to believe this kind of logic, he had done; it was impossible to add any thing that could expose it to be an absurdity. The depreciation of assignats was the everlasting burthen of all their harangues. France was utterly undone, France was incapable of all exertion, France was completely exhausted in consequence of the depreciation of her assignats. This had been the incessant story with which the Parliament and people of this country had been deluded from the beginning of the war. Last year they were told, O, France could not pay for her assignats were at a discount of eighty

per cent. (some gentleman said in an audible whisper, it was not last year, but the year before that this was said). Last year, or the year before, said Mr. Fox, it is little matter which, it is hardly possible for any memory to state the precise time of these assertions, they have been so incessantly made, so incessantly repeated, so incessantly held forth to the people of this country as grounds of hope, and so constantly ended in disappointment, that whether it was last year or the year before, was precisely the same to the argument. When he was told that the assignats were at a discount of 80 per cent. he ceased to think upon the subject; from the moment that they were 80 per cent. discount, it was no longer of consequence to speculate upon them. All theories of mere arithmeticians on the subject were from that instant at an end; when a paper currency was at 80 per cent. discount, it would be said, upon the mere calculations of theory, to be tantamount to extinction. But when they looked to experience and practice, when they referred to the example of America, a reflecting statesman would hesitate before he pronounced upon the subject, and before he presumed to delude his country, by building on such an hypothesis. And accordingly, as if the instance of America had not been sufficient to correct the fallacy of mere calculation on such a subject, France had given another lesson on the point. France, that was reduced to such a state of weakness, as from her deplorable situation to be held out as an easy prey. France, who, in the month of June last, was said to be gasping in her last agonies, and when on account of her deplorable situation, it was said to be impolitic for us to give her Peace. France has since the date of her expiring agony made the most brilliant campaign, he would venture to say, that the history of mankind almost exhibited, in which her arms had every where been triumphant, and where, by the mere force of conquest, she had reduced almost every one of our Allies to sue for Peace, and secure their safety by negotiation. Such was the issue of their calculations upon her distress! He was afraid, he said, of such assertions, and surely no men of common sense, after such an issue of this kind of reasoning, would again calculate upon insects from the depreciation of their paper. But it was not on a paper only, they were utterly destitute of provisions it seemed, and as an argument for continuing the war, they were told that the French government had been obliged to unload the ships at Brest in order to supply Paris with bread. This was said to have been their condition; be it so. What must be their feeling of the cause which they had engaged that

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under such a pressure of scarcity, could rouse them to such exertions? Those who held out last year this argument of their distress as a ground of hope, and who put into his Majesty's Speech the memorable expression, that the internal situation of the enemy would make us indulge a hope that they were hastening to such a state of order and regular government, as might be capable of maintaining the accustomed relations of peace and amity with other powers, would now explain upon what better grounds they held out the less precise and less intelligible hope of the present Speech. They then said that the distresses were likely to produce a return of a state of order and regular government, so as to enable us to treat with them with confidence and security. What do they say now? It was most material to attend to the words which they had put in his Majesty's mouth. "The distraction and anarchy which have so long prevailed in that country have led to a crisis." When I heard these words, said Mr. Fox, I took it for granted that we were to be told the exact nature of the crisis, and the good which our ministers were about to extract from it. But mark the words: "have led to a crisis of which it is, as yet, impossible to foresee the issue." Here is a piece of information for the Parliament and people of Great Britain! It goes on, however. "But which must in all human probability produce." Ay, now we come, I hope, to the desirable point—produce peace, I hope—no such thing! "*produce consequences highly important to the interests of Europe!*" Good God! Mr. Speaker, said Mr. Fox, is this a proof of the improvement of our situation since last year! Does this hold out to the impoverished, oppressed, and starving people of England a nearer prospect of the termination of this unfortunate war? Last year their distress was likely to produce such an order of things as would give us a secure peace; and now all that we are to look for from the distraction and anarchy that reign in France, are consequences that may be important to the interests of Europe! What period of the eventful history of this wonderful Revolution has not been productive of consequences important to Europe? Of what change that has taken place might not the same thing be said? When the Revolution, as it is called, of the 31st of May took place, might it not have been said, that a crisis was approached that might have produced consequences important to the interests of Europe? When Robespierre's tyranny was extinguished, might not the same thing have been said? Upon the insurrections that have happened, from time to time, and particularly on the late insurrection, in short, on every great

event that has arisen in France the same equivocal words might have been used by his Majesty's ministers.

What then were the people of England to understand from these words now? What prospect did they hold forth that his Majesty's ministers were to seize on the first favourable moment in which they might negotiate beneficially for peace? If they were to argue from their past conduct, they surely could draw no favourable conclusion, nor any rational ground of hope from these unintelligible words. In December 1792, Mr. Fox said, he had made a motion, to which he certainly could not, without a degree of egotism, recur, because he could not recur to it without pride and satisfaction to himself; he asked whether a negotiation might not have been entered upon at that moment with a greater probability of securing a beneficial peace to England than now. He had sometime in every Session since that period, renewed in one way or another the same motion; and he desired to know whether our perverse continuance in the proud denial of its being the proper moment to negotiate, had bettered our condition; or, opened to us the prospect of a more honourable termination of the War? On the contrary, had we not from year to year entangled ourselves deeper and rendered the practicability of peace upon safe and honourable terms more hopeless? But there was one point of view in which our present situation had been regarded by an Honourable Gentleman, very much connected with ministers, and who he hoped spoke on the present occasion authoritatively. The Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Jenkinson) had said, that he was now willing to admit that all prospects of restoring the Emigrants to their estates, and the Bourbon family to the throne of France was hopeless; that it was a matter of prudence to calculate the value of an object, together with the chance of procuring it, and not to pursue any object however desirable, beyond the rational hope of attainment. If the disasters of the war had produced this conviction in the minds of his Majesty's ministers and their connections, he who thought that wisdom was the first of human acquisitions, and that prudence in the governors of a state was not merely a most valuable, but a most necessary virtue, would be willing to allow that our situation was improved. It was improved, because our ministers were brought at length to a conviction of their error; because they had returned to their senses. But, good God, what a series of calamity and disaster was required to produce this restoration of their reason! What a state of degradation must that House and the country be come to, that it should be held out as a
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matter of exultation, and as a proof of our situation being improved, that ministers had been at length corrected, not by the indignation and energy of the people, but by the consequences of their own imbecility and guilt.

What a contrast did this exhibit between the present and the ancient state of England, when the power of controul, which belonged to the vigorous understanding, and the manly spirit of Englishmen was extinct, and the people were supinely content to wait until obstinate fury should, by its natural course, correct itself. Oh, miserable England, to what a state are you fallen, when such is the wretched consolation in which you indulge! The expedition to Quiberon was one of the grand sources of producing this conviction in ministers.

He knew not by whom that expedition was planned; he knew not in whose desperate bosom the idea of the horrid expedition was engendered, but it was a scene over which the heart of every manly Briton shed tears of blood; and which had done more mischief to the British character, had sunk it lower in the eyes of observant Europe, and would stain it more in the estimation of posterity, than all the rest of the operations of this war, frantic, base, and inhuman as many of its projects had been. Good God, to think that so many brave and honourable men, among whom there were gentlemen of the purest feelings, and of the most honourable principles, should be led to massacre in the way in which they had been; that one of the most gallant among them should be denied, in the hour of dying, the consolation of having his letter made public, was such an act of savage barbarity as would leave an eternal stain upon England, if parliament and the people did not testify their indignation by fixing a strong mark of censure upon its authors! Yet even this lesson, even the dreadful issue of this abominable scheme did not produce the effect upon the minds of his Majesty's Ministers which it was calculated to do; another expedition was framed, in which the Emigrants were to be employed in a descent upon the coast of France. The second expedition was concerted, perhaps, with somewhat less indiscretion, and somewhat less barbarity, than the first; but it seemed to have its origin in the same principles, and to owe its birth to the same father. It was owing only to its utter failure that it had not been equally disastrous; for, if the expedition to l'Isle Dieu had been carried into effect in the same manner as the first, the unfortunate persons must have been equally abandoned. And yet, though not attended

tended with the same fatal effects as the first, the expedition had not been without misfortune. Our fleet had been exposed to great risque on a dangerous coast; and even now we must either land the stores upon l'Isle Dieu, for the maintainance of the unhappy persons still there, or abandon them to the certain, though lingering death of famine, or to the more merciful doom of the guillotine. It was impossible to animadvert upon the conduct of ministers in these expeditions without standing astonished at the insanity with which they were conceived. It must now be a matter of secret congratulation to themselves that every one of their projects had failed, their success would have made it impossible for them to have maintained the argument which they had held that day. What did they do? They sent an officer to summon Bell Isle in the name of Louis XVIII. the legal King of France, and thus they made their officer declare a falsehood, a direct falsehood, as great a falsehood as if he were traitor enough to declare that Cardinal York was the legal King of Great Britain. But what must have been the consequence if, upon this summons, Bell Isle or Noirmoutier had yielded? We must have landed and taken possession of them in the name of Louis XVIII. and this unfortunate Prince, just landed in the place under our auspices, would have been identified with our cause, and we should have been pledged to the restoration of this legal monarch in his rights. Could we then have had the blessing which was this day held up of abandoning a course which could no longer be pursued with rational hopes? We should then have been reduced to the melancholy alternative of abandoning the Prince and his followers with infamy, or of prosecuting his cause with despair. Fortunately for ministers, however, their project had failed, and they were thus relieved by the want of success from the folly of their act. It was by this sort of reasoning alone that he could resolve the strange paradox of the seconder of the motion, who had said that the very failure of the war had produced good consequences. If it were applied to our expeditions to the coast of France, it perhaps might hold true, as the consequence was a conviction in the breasts of ministers that it was impracticable to pursue the restoration of Louis any more. He said that it was with pain that he took up the time of the House with any observations upon this kind of reasoning. He was confident that the natural plain sense and understandings of Englishmen, who had always been distinguished for their love of direct and plain dealing, would soon be disgusted,

disgusted, and would reject with indignation and nausea a cause that required such refinement of reasoning to support it. An Honourable Gentleman had said, that the opinions of the French were certainly specious in themselves, and calculated to intoxicate the minds of the lower ranks of men; but that, in their own nature, they would sooner or later generate such a tyranny as that which Robespierre exhibited, which again, in its own nature, would correct the impression which the specious opinions had originally made. The war, then, with all its disasters, had been so far useful, that it had accelerated the conviction which Robespierre's tyranny would of itself have more slowly produced. The war was a sort of yeast that fermented this tyranny; and thus, in this idle train of reasoning, was the House presented with another theory in excuse of the war. If men were to play with such theories as matter of amusement, he should certainly not contend about them. He should then be extremely willing to leave them as a very good theme for school-boys, as the Honourable seconder of the Motion had said; but it was a dreadful thing when such theories were taken up by statesmen, and gravely acted upon as legitimate causes for plunging their country into the horrors of war. Such theories might suit well for a literary or a political disputant, and might be made very amusing either in a club-room or in a pamphlet; but for a man to undertake the office of a statesman, and to bring such theories into practice, was such an outrage, not merely upon common sense, but upon moral duty, as must shock the heart of every considerate, and of every feeling mind. What a picture of human wantonness did it not exhibit, that in order to ascertain the question whether a certain set of opinions might be brought so much more speedily into disrepute, it was a good and right thing that a hundred millions of money should be squandered, and hundreds of thousands of our fellow creatures be put to death! In his mind, war against opinions was in no instance, and could not be either just or pardonable. A war of self-defence against acts he could understand, he could explain, and he could justify; but no war against opinions could be supported by reason, or by justice. It was drawing the sword of an inquisition. How could we blame all those abominable acts of bloodshed and torture which had been committed from time to time under the diabolical influence of superstition, and under the specious name of religion, when we ourselves had the presumption to wage a similar war? Who would say that all the blood that had been

been spilt under the fury of religious enthusiasm, might not have been made to flow from the pure but misguided motive of correcting opinions, that zealots thought wrong, when we ourselves thus dared to dip our hands in the blood of our fellow-creatures, on the mere pretext of correcting the errors of opinion? We must change all the doctrines that we have been taught to cherish about religious persecution and intolerance; we must begin to venerate the authors of the Holy Inquisition, and consider them as pious and pure men, who committed their murders for the beneficent purpose of correcting the heresies which they considered as so vile, and restoring the blessings of what they conceived to be the only true system of Christianity. In the same manner the present war against opinions was to be entitled to our esteem, and its authors to be venerated for their morality. In this war they also were great conquerors; they had lost towns, cities, nay, kingdoms; they had squandered a hundred millions of money, they had lost a hundred thousand men, they had lost their allies, they had lost the cause of the Emigrants, they had lost the throne to the family of Bourbon, but they had gained a set of rather better opinions to France. Mr. Fox contended, that at every moment from the commencement of the war to the present instant, our ministers might have negotiated with the French upon better terms than they could at this time; and that our relative situation had been gradually growing worse. The famous Decree of the 19th November, 1792, was the first great pretext for going to war.—That Decree, he had always said, we might have got rid of by negotiation. But, if that Decree was an obstacle to negotiation, they knew that the disgusting tyrant Robespierre himself not only formally repealed it, but made it the pretext for murdering Brissot and about one hundred persons more, whom he called its authors. Why not negotiate after the Decree was repealed? Oh! they were afraid of the fascination and temptation of the French principles on the minds of the people of this country. But, surely, they cannot say that these principles continued to be fascinating and tempting after the reign of Robespierre. If ever they had any attraction for the popular mind, they surely must have lost it, and become on the contrary, the detestation and horror of every human being, as exhibited under the implacable tyranny of that despicable miscreant. Did they make overtures of peace when these principles had lost their temptation? What! it would be said, would you have treated with Robespierre? Why not with Robespierre?

spierre? Do we not daily treat with tyrants? He would have treated with Robespierre; not because he did not think his government the most disgusting tyranny that ever existed, but because England had nothing to do with his tyranny. On the 27th of July Robespierre was cut off, and his principles declared to be infamous. Why did not ministers then make overtures of peace? There was nothing in their former conduct that could give that House or the nation confidence in their intentions of making peace whenever the favourable opportunity should arrive. On the contrary, they stood convicted of fraud; for when an Honourable Friend of his made a motion on the 26th of January last, which it was not found convenient directly to oppose, an amendment was moved, declaring that they were ready to enter into a negotiation whenever there should be a government established capable of maintaining the customary relations of amity and peace. Did they offer negotiation when it was proved by experience that France had such a government? It had been proved that France did maintain such relations of peace and amity, for Prussia had made peace with her, Spain had made peace with her, many of the States of Germany had made peace with her, and among others the Elector of Hanover had made peace. The Honourable seconder of the Motion had said, that any one who made an argument on the conduct of the Elector of Hanover, and reasoned on it as an example for England, would deserve to be treated as a school-boy. He must submit to incur the imputation; for he confessed, with deference to the Honourable Gentleman, that it was worthy to be discussed. He was ready to own that there might be situations in which the conduct of the Elector of Hanover, in a negotiation, might not be a model for England; but what was the case here? The Right Honourable Gentleman opposite, in speaking of the state of France, said, that if a peace was concluded with her, in her then condition, he should exclaim,

Toto certatum est corpore regni.

Her situation had not changed when the Hanoverian minister thought it his duty to negotiate with them for peace. Would the Right Honourable Gentleman say on the occasion,

Toto certatum est corpore regni?

He did not believe that he would venture to make any such assertion.

assertion. They had heard that night much panegyric on the new Constitution of France. They might almost have supposed themselves sitting in the Convention, and to have heard L'ouvet, or some other author of the new Constitution, delivering a panegyric on it. All our hopes were now to be fixed upon this new Constitution: he confessed, for one, he was not willing to place much dependance upon a constitution, of which he knew nothing, and which had not been tried; but this was the new theory of the day; this constitution was to be capable of maintaining the accustomed relations of peace and amity. Mark the conclusion of this argument, that the proper time for treating together for peace, was to be put off till we had experience of this new constitution; what was to be the term of probation he knew not; one thing only was certain, that on this new pretext, the war was to be continued. What if this constitution, like all their former constitutions, should fail? Why then our hopes of peace must fail too, and we must begin again. What a miserable series of subterfuge and expedient was all this! But, say they, would you make peace with a country that changed its constitution so often? To which, says Mr. Fox, I answer, yes, I would; if they changed their constitution every week, nay every day, if they had seven constitutions per week, I would treat with them. What have I to do with their changes of constitution? experience has shewn that neither the changes of men, nor the changes of constitutions, has had any effect on the engagements which they have formed with foreign countries. I will not speak of the recent treaties they have entered into; but let us look how all the successive parties have acted towards Sweden in the neutrality which she established. The party of Brissot, the party of the Mountain which succeeded the party of the Girondists; the individual tyranny of Robespierre, into which the Mountain subsided, the party who overthrew Robespierre, and all the shades and changes of government which have happened since, have all with uniform minds observed the treaty with Sweden, and maintained the relation of peace and amity which subsisted between them. In like manner some changes have happened since the treaty with Prussia, and it has been regularly maintained. It is idle to talk of the theory of a constitution being a ground of dependence for the observation of a treaty; if a rational treaty is made, and it is the interest of parties to keep it, that is the only true and wise dependance which you can have for the continuance of peace. It was said, continued Mr Fox, that

that much had been done to meliorate and soften down the opinions of France. He asked whether a recognition of their independence, and an offer to treat, would not do more to bring the people of that country to an amicable disposition to treat than all our failures had hitherto done? He said that the offer ought to come from us, because we had made resolutions, and had been guilty of the indiscretion of coming to declarations that stood in the way of negotiation. These must be done away in order to bring us to an even footing. It was said, would you leave them the Low Countries and Holland? That House was not the place, nor was the present the time, to talk of terms. There was no doubt of one important fact, and ministers might go to a negotiation with a confidence of that fact, namely, that if France, on account of her successes, exacted high terms, such as were inconsistent with the honour and interests of this country, they would be supported in the dire, but then necessary alternative. The terms at the same time in every negotiation must depend on the relative situation of the parties. But he would not admit of that eternal evasion that the time was improper. One year we were too high to treat, another year we were too low; and thus the continuance of war was prolonged, without any calculation being made whether the expence of continuing it for one year was not more than the difference of terms we might expect between a good and a bad relative situation. In his mind every time was the proper time for treating; and it would not be denied but that we had suffered more favourable periods to escape than we were likely again to possess. When we were masters of Valenciennes and Condé, and that France was beset on every side with insurrections raging in her bowels, that was the favourable time to treat. But no, we were then too high. What, treat when she almost lay expiring at our feet? We suffered that moment to pass. Last year again we had great success in the West Indies, Guadeloupe, and St. Lucia were ours, in addition to Martinique, and France was obviously desirous of peace. No, then again we were too high, and we were told in a lofty strain, in the month of June last, What, shall we treat with her when she lies in her last agony? Nothing, they said, could save her, and it was our interest to withhold from her the peace of which she was desirous. The event has proved that their prediction was not well founded; and here we are after a three years' war reduced to a state in which we are said to be too low to treat, with nothing left to us but the hopes that some day or another a favourable opportunity will arise for

negotiation. In the mean time we have only one of all our allies left to us, and that ally must, by the principle on which he has acted for the last year, be hired to continue. All our hopes are to be founded on our conquests in the West Indies. Let us look with impartial eyes at the state of our West Indies. Was there any thing very consoling in that quarter of the world? He dreaded to encounter the examination. The French commerce, it was said, was utterly annihilated; and the French navy too was reduced. We had certainly had many brilliant naval achievements, which did immortal honour to the British flag; but at the same time it would not be said that our own trade was entirely protected. Insurance to Jamaica had risen from four to eight per cent; and he did not think that even our internal situation was improved. His Majesty's speech had held out a melancholy picture with respect to the quantity of grain in the kingdom, and the subject was recommended to their most serious consideration. Whenever it came before them he should give it, certainly, the most careful and the most impartial examination. It was not his opinion that it was greatly within the province of human legislation to do much on such a topic; but what could be done in the way of regulation, he trusted they should with one voice steadily and speedily pursue. Nothing, he believed, would do so much towards preventing the evil of a scarcity, as to give the people the restoration of peace, which would be likely to bring with it, its usual companion, plenty.

It was an insult on common sense to say that war and military expeditions did not, in their very nature, aggravate scarcity, by increased consumption. Putting the whole country into the military state which England was at this time at home, necessarily increased the consumption of grain, and if this was the case, how much more did the argument hold good with respect to expeditions to distant parts? The quantity of increased consumption, without taking into the account the quantities damaged and lost, were immense, and he would be bold to say, that if government, instead of interfering with the regular merchants, and putting an end to all the active competition of men more expert in trade than themselves, had followed the example of the government of France, with respect to the ships at Brest, and had unloaded the transports that were sent to Quiberon-bay, they would have done more towards alleviating the late scarcity, than by all the corn which their agents imported. He could not leave that miserable expedition to Quiberon-bay, without again ex-
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pressing his indignation at its horror. The House would do *him the justice to recollect how much beyond his usual pertinacity* he had urged them to avoid the indiscretion and cruelty of employing the emigrants on any such expedition. He had said that they could not be employed so as to stand on the same terms with ~~our own~~ troops; that their condition would be desperate in regard to France; that therefore it was neither politic with respect to ourselves, nor kind and considerate with regard to them; that if we employed them on any such expedition, we identified their cause with ours, and made it impossible for us to retract with honour whatever might be the events of the war. What was the answer to his reasoning? That in fact their cause and ours was the same, that the crown of George III. was not safe upon his head, if they were not reinstated in their country. Thus the die was cast; they were thus united to join the fatal standard; they embarked in our cause, which they were thus told was the same as their own, and they were sent on that fatal expedition which every feeling heart must deplore. Though he could not entertain the idea which some coarse and vulgar minds had taken up, that certain ministers in the Cabinet, reflecting on the indiscretion they had committed in thus charging themselves with so many of these emigrants, had sent them on this forlorn enterprize as a happy riddance, yet he must repeat, that if the virtue and indignation of the country did not fix a censure upon the authors of that expedition, the disgrace of it would eternally rest upon the character of the nation. When he first moved for entering into a negotiation with France, it was said, What! would you negotiate with men about to stain their hands with the blood of their Sovereign? Yet now, if the present speech meant to say any thing honestly, it meant that with these very men, ministers would have no objection to negotiate at a certain crisis. The nature of this murder then was such as to be washed away after a two or three years purification. And even with Athen, who among others dipped his hands in royal blood, they would have no objection to treat. It had always been his opinion, that if we could not get men of pure morals, and men of personal esteem to treat with, we must take the men we could find, taking care that our treaty should be founded upon such principles of moderation and justice as should not be likely to vary with times or parties, and which should be the interest of both countries to maintain. Instead of this we had acted upon a set of unprincipled delicacies, by which this country had been reduced to such a state

of distress, as for the last six months to make almost every common man dependent upon charity for his subsistence. Was not such a state more likely to undermine the loyalty and obedience they were desirous to cherish than all the fascination of French principles? Was it not likely that under such a pressure, undisciplined minds might be led to cherish the idea, that that government could not be perfectly sound, nor practically happy, which inflicted on so large a proportion of its people so much misery! It must be a matter of great consolation to hear from his Majesty's speech, that instead of any such refractory sentiment a very general spirit of order and submission to the laws had been manifested by his people; and their pleasure ought to be increased, when they recollected the dreadful and dark conspiracies which raged in the country a twelvemonth ago. These conspiracies had been quashed in a most extraordinary way, they had been quashed by the full, clear, and honourable acquittal of all the conspirators: and now this order and submission to the laws was a matter of exultation to his Majesty, when the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act was in full force! Another most extraordinary argument had been adduced for the war by an Honourable Gentleman opposite to him (Mr. Jenkinson); the war, he said, was quite necessary in order to enable men of rank to inveigh with becoming spirit against French principles, and the diabolical doctrines of jacobinism. He was very ready to allow that the philippics against the French principles, in which gentlemen in that House and elsewhere so liberally indulged themselves, did require some means to give them currency; but that they wanted a war to give them force, that nothing less than an army of 200,000 men and a navy of 110,000 men could make these philippics go down, he did not know till now. He remembered it was an accusation against Roland, that in order to corrupt the public mind, in propagating his opinions he had squandered much of the public money; Roland in his defence said, he had certainly not squandered much of the public money, he had only spent 30,000 livres Tournois, and that in assignats, in printing; whereas it has cost our ministers one hundred millions sterling to circulate and support their harangues against the French! A more extraordinary means of publishing their invectives could not have been thought of. One would have thought that having their civil list, their patronage, their places, their pensions, and their newspapers, by which to spread and give currency to their abuse against the French, it was strange that they should hit upon a war as the only means to recommend their invectives

invectives to the taste of the country. If he could not entirely agree with the Honourable Gentleman as to the war being begun only in aid of the intemperate language and violent epithets which were thrown out upon the French, yet nothing was so certain as that the inflamed passions which gave rise to that language, gave rise also to the war; and that the good sense and manly feelings which would have avoided the one, would also have directed us to the rational course which would have prevented the other. The Honourable Gentleman spoke of the Rights of Man, among the reprobated French principles. That all men had equal rights, he would not stop to argue; it was a truth which the Honourable Gentleman himself must feel. It was not the fallacy of that doctrine that had made the French revolution disgusting by its atrocities; it was the misapplication and misuse that had produced so much turpitude and ruin. Mr. Fox concluded a speech of two hours with saying, that for these reasons he could not consent to vote for the address which had been moved; he held in his hand an amendment, expressing in short terms the facts he had enumerated, and drawing from them the practical use that ought to be made of them. He read the amendment, which, after enumerating the circumstances of our disastrous campaign, and stating that from the experience of their being able to maintain the accustomed relations of peace and amity with other nations, prayed his Majesty to give directions to his ministers, to offer such terms of peace to the French Republic, as should be consistent with the honour of his Majesty's Crown, and with the security and interests of his people.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* began by observing, that no question had ever occurred in the history of this country, which involved in it more circumstances peculiarly connected with its interest, honour, and safety, than the question which had been proposed to their determination that night by his noble Friend, together with the amendment that had been made to it by the Right Honourable Gentleman opposite to him. That amendment contained a proposition so extraordinary in itself, that he could not believe the Right Honourable Gentleman was serious in making it. It was neither more nor less than this. After observing the supposed state of universal degradation and disappointment, to which we had been reduced in consequence of the war, we were advised at this moment to sue on our part for peace, without being informed how the negotiation was to be conducted, or what indemnity this country was to receive. That amendment, therefore,

therefore, only held out the mockery of returning to a state of security and peace. Such was the nature and state of the question which the Right Honourable Gentleman had brought before them; a proposition, which according to the sacred rules of Parliament, any Gentleman might bring forward without personal responsibility, and upon which therefore he could retort no threat of an impeachment; but the case of a Minister making such a proposition, except by the previous consent of Parliament, would have been very different. Mr. Pitt begged first to take a view of the general proposition, and leading points of contest in the Address, leaving out of the question some extraneous topics. He wished to confine his attention to the Address that had been moved by his Noble Friend, and to contrast it with the amendment. The first leading point in the King's speech, and the proposition which had been laid before that House for their concurrence was this: "That notwithstanding the many evils unfavourable to the common cause, the prospect resulting from the general situation of affairs has in many important respects been materially improved in the course of the present war." The first proposition therefore to be proved was, that on considering the relative state of the Belligerent Powers since the commencement of the present war, notwithstanding our reverses and disappointments, the prospect arising out of the general situation of affairs, had been materially improved. In the first place, before he entered into any detail upon the subject, he begged leave to ask, what was the period comprised in this proposition? It included the space between the opening of the last session of Parliament, and the moment at which he was then speaking. He wished to ask every candid man, with what feelings and with what expectations they entered that House at the commencement of the last session? He then desired them to ask themselves, what were their own impressions, and what was their belief of the general impressions of the country, with regard to general security, at the present moment, compared with what they were last year. He hoped the Gentlemen on the other side of the House were not wholly forgetful what a melancholy picture they had formerly drawn of the situation of this country; how deplorable, how dreadful, how unprecedented our calamitous situation was at the commencement of the last session. They now seemed desirous to forget those exaggerated statements of last year, and to apply them to the present. He hoped when a fair comparison was made between these two periods, no candid man would suppose that he meant to insult the

the people of England, when he used the word *satisfaction*. He again declared, that on a general review of the state of this country ten months ago, and at the moment when he was speaking, he felt a small degree of satisfaction. But, he said, he must go somewhat farther, and must state plain, distinct, and solid grounds of satisfaction. He wished to observe, that there were essential objects, of which they might be deprived, and from the importance of which they had been led into the war. His grounds of satisfaction were these: Allowing for all the victories the enemy had gained in different quarters, allowing for every advantage they had obtained; allowing also for all the calamities whatever which might have befallen this country or our allies, he begged of the House to look at the present principles of the war, to examine it in all its parts, and they would easily observe the grounds of his satisfaction, and the state of our improvement. They could not fail to perceive the enemy's reduced means of prosecuting the war. The enemy was now in a situation to give us fair prospects of their being perhaps soon more capable of giving reasonable security of engagements of peace. They were now in a situation in which they felt a greater necessity for peace, and in which it was apparent they had a much stronger disposition for it. If he was right in that proposition, which he should endeavour to prove, was it to insult the country to express the satisfaction which he felt from these circumstances which he had just stated? Many observations which he meant to make in the illustration of the subject, had been most ably anticipated by his Noble Friend who moved the Address, and by his Right Honourable Friend who seconded it. The first question that presented itself, Mr. Pitt said, was, whether or not the means of the enemy were reduced for carrying on the war. He had no doubt but he should make out that proposition to the satisfaction of every unprejudiced mind. At an early period of the Right Honourable Gentleman's speech, he seemed for a considerable time to imagine that the only ground of satisfaction, which he (Mr. Pitt) had to state, was, that the enemy was less capable of carrying on the war on account of the want of subsistence. The Right Honourable Gentleman had also made a number of observations respecting the high price of grain at home. This was a subject to which, before he sat down he should beg leave to call the attention of the House. He did not mean to rest solely on that ground of satisfaction which had been stated by the Right Honourable Gentleman. It had been said by him, "That the old story

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of the depreciation of assignats was an argument of no weight; that, considering the state to which they were at present reduced, it was precisely the same as if they had been ten times lower; that they were equal to nothing; and that as the enemy had relaxed none of their military operations on that account, it was the clearest proof they could go on without them." At the commencement of the last session, the assignats had been truly stated by the Right Honourable Gentleman to be only about one fourth of their nominal value. When this old story came now to be repeated, it was this:—At the commencement of the last Session of Parliament, the value of assignats was from 20 to 25 per cent. At the present moment they were only *one and an half per cent.* viz. for one hundred assignats of nominal value, only one and an half were received; consequently, they were now only about one sixteenth of the value they were last year. There was therefore some variety in this old story. There was a difference in the account. There was also an uniformity in this account, for every time he spoke of them there was a successive depression. The system of terror produced miraculous effects on this subject. For the space of a twelvemonth it kept assignats up at par. When that system was destroyed, they returned to that state of depression in which it found them. They were at present only one sixteenth part of the value they were at ten months ago. If any Gentleman should ask him what the consequences of this great depreciation were, they were these:—Suppose any individual in France, ten months ago had received any number of assignats as the price of his labour, or in payment for a debt, and that he had laid up those assignats as the means of his future subsistence, he would find at this moment that they were only one sixteenth part of the value of what they were at the commencement of the last session. This was the state of the private fortune of every individual in France. The prodigality of their system forced into circulation between six and seven milliards, which was equal to 280 millions sterling, and which was three or four times more than the amount of all the money in France in its richest state, and which its commerce wanted for its circulating medium. At that time these assignats produced the highest degree of difficulty and embarrassment; and notwithstanding all the advantages the French have gained during the course of the present year; notwithstanding all the deductions that had been made, assignats were only equal to one sixteenth part of their former value. This was confessed by every

man who had written in France;—it was confessed by every man who had spoken in France;—it was admitted by every man who thought in Europe. At present they had assignats in circulation to the incredible amount of 720 millions sterling. The number of assignats was still increasing; so that the repeated increase of new issues was to be added to that immense sum. The enemy had therefore to face another campaign under these circumstances. Supposing the other Powers of Europe were desirous to put them to the hard necessity of trying the experiment, he firmly believed in his conscience that the prodigal resources of their system could not be supported unless by the restoration of the system of terror. Was he to consider all these circumstances as nothing? Most certainly not. But there were some favourable circumstances in the situation of the enemy, and he had no desire to conceal them. He had no difficulty to state the equivocal conduct of the King of Prussia. The French could also disband the two armies which they had withdrawn from two different quarters of Spain, except in so far as those armies had been employed by different diversions. On account of the peace they had concluded with the King of Prussia, &c. they might be enabled to a certain degree to contend with a much smaller army than when they had to oppose the whole of the confederacy. Yet it must be observed, that for every pound sterling that was formerly paid to each man in such an army, they must give sixteen pounds sterling at the commencement of the present year. The depreciation of assignats was constantly encreasing, and not only encreasing, but encreasing in a compound ratio of an encreasing proportion. The only question was, whether, as these assignats would very soon, in all probability, be totally inefficient, there were any other visible means of maintaining their operations. It would certainly be very rash in any man to hazard a decided opinion on this point. Without pretending to give such an opinion on a subject so large and complicated, and where it was extremely difficult to judge with precision on the general result of all circumstances, he had no difficulty in stating, that he saw the greatest perplexities arising from this depression of assignats, pervading every individual in the State, and bringing nothing, as the French themselves had said, but misery and paper into every corner of the country.

That circumstance had been so pressing upon every man in the country, that if they had had the means of substituting any other less dangerous and less wasteful, what greater necessity could there be for the application of such a

remedy. Every financier in every department of the government had declared, that the safety of their Republic depended on the regular payment of the army. He said he took this account of the subject from the records of France. He had taken it from the accounts of some of the most remarkable ministers who had appeared during the different periods of the revolution; some of them had been removed from the situation, and from the present situation of France, it was probable some of them might be restored. He observed that these ministers, at a time when assignats were far short of what they were at present, when the depreciation was only one half of their nominal value, declared, that unless a violent remedy was applied, the most serious consequences were to be apprehended; and, that it was absolutely necessary to raise the credit of these assignats by taking a number of them out of circulation, and giving security for the value of those that remained. Mr. Pitt here observed, he was ashamed of wearying the House on a subject that was so clear and obvious; but he hoped he should be excused when it was recollected that it was extremely interesting and important. These resources might last a little longer or a shorter time before they produced their final effect; but they had in them the seeds of decay, and the inevitable cause of a violent dissolution. As it might be asked, what they had been able to propose as a remedy, he wished that every gentleman in that House had had an opportunity of perusing a plan which had been published, three months ago, by a person of no inconsiderable abilities, M. Montesquieu. According to him there were thirteen milliards of assignats in circulation, which were five milliards less than the Convention had since acknowledged. That made a difference of no less than two hundred million sterling. That gentleman proposed two things; first, to take out of circulation an immense part of those assignats, and to give a solid and adequate pledge to the public, in order to secure those that remained in circulation being at par. That circumstance would enable them to carry on the war with vigour. He said it would carry him too far to enter into a detail of this plan; but every man must be satisfied of the desperate state of that country, when they heard the nature of the remedy. They proposed taking out of circulation 1,500 millions of livres, by appropriating for money which had not yet been received of those who had purchased of the public the estates of the emigrants, and other lands which had been confiscated. In other words, those assignats were to be discharged by bad debts. The pledge given to them

them was, that on an average they were to receive in land one fifth part of their value, and if the rents should not be paid them, they were to receive interest for their paper. But it was observable, that that paper was not transferable from hand to hand, as was the case with the stocks in this country. Such then was the state of France, where such a remedy had been proposed, and that remedy to this hour had never been applied. In the last days of the Convention another plan was proposed. A few days ago, Vernier proposed as a remedy, that the plates should be destroyed, and it was decreed that no more should be issued, provided other means could be found to carry on the war. To supply the place of assignats, metallic pieces were to be introduced into circulation; but it was not explained whether these were to pass for more than their intrinsic value, which if they did they were only metallic assignats instead of assignats made of paper. If those metallic pieces were to pass at their value, no mention was made how they were to be procured. They had given no information how precious metals to that immense extent were to be obtained. It was unnecessary for him to state how a nation destitute of specie, and of the precious metals could procure them. A nation destitute of gold and silver could only procure those precious metals in exchange for the exportation of those productions it had raised from its own soil, after leaving at home sufficient for its necessary consumption, and after procuring all the other articles of consumption, which its own soil did not produce. The eternal law of things proved that this was the only mode of procuring the precious metals. Their commerce was ruined. What was lost by the destruction of the commerce of their colonies, of the Levant, and the loss of their internal manufactures, particularly those of Lyons, had been estimated at many millions sterling. The causes of their necessary importation were also to be taken into the account. He was ready to admit their successes on the Rhine. At first view, it appeared impossible they could have faced the Austrian army which was so formidable in that quarter. He admitted, and admitted with feelings of regret, their having been enabled to make so calamitous a use of the advantages they had obtained. The expedition to Quiberon-bay, and the hard fate of the unfortunate emigrants who were fighting for him whom they conceived to be their lawful monarch, was to be considered by us as a calamity, independent of its effects. Every man's personal feelings were interested in that event: every man in that House, and in the country, who were possessed of the principles of loyalty and honour, must feel regret. He said he would admit the enemy had

been only kept on the defensive on the side of Italy; but he must desire the House to look at the enemy during the course of the present campaign, and they would clearly see, that notwithstanding the diminished number of their opponents, and though their successes were great and many, the internal situation of France was most wretched and deplorable. They had not made their attempt to cross the Rhine till almost the close of the campaign. It was not easy to find any other cause for that but that they had relaxed in their energy. It was difficult to conceive how their vast machinery could be directed, or how the power of the state could be supported without assignats. If they were taken out of circulation, they could not command the labour of their own subjects either for civil or military operations.—Although this circumstance had not as yet produced its effect, it was evidently approaching towards it. The instruments of government in France were so numerous, that in any other country they would form a nation. There was another thing worthy of remark, that to many persons employed by the state, they had been obliged to allot a number of articles of necessity in kind. What would be the next point, when they were obliged to hold out imperfect means of subsistence to a successful and victorious army? They had been compelled to add one-seventh in money to the daily pay of their soldiers, who received by that means ten times equal the amount of their pay in assignats. He directed the attention of the House to consider the effect of that measure. No sooner had it been adopted in the French armies, than it was attended with this consequence, that a soldier found himself a richer man than his officer. He hoped he had not wasted the time of the House by stating these observations, which seemed fully to confirm all the reasonings and speculations he had formed on the subject. Taking therefore into the account all the victories obtained by France, and also their external glory of foreign acquisitions; when he considered the state of their internal resources, and their inability to carry on the war for another campaign, he had no doubt but the situation of things was materially improved.

Mr. Pitt said he must be very short on those articles which still remained. If the enemy had entertained the idea they were under a greater necessity, from the situation of their affairs, to procure peace, they would naturally have a stronger inclination to obtain it. He contended, that all these circumstances evidently arose out of the present situation of France; led him to observe, that the prospect of the present situation of affairs in France might afford more reasonable means

means of effecting peace with security. Such were the present dispositions, the present principles professed, and acted upon in France, as they appeared from recent transactions, compared with any other period since the Revolution. The new constitution of France, if it has been put into activity at all, had only been adopted a few hours ago, and therefore it would be better to wait a little before they pronounced on that constitution. But, in the mean time, he desired the House to consider the manner in which that constitution had been ushered into the world. There were certainly many circumstances in the present situation of France, favourable for a disposition to treat for peace, though it might still be made a question, whether there were enough to make it advisable or practicable for us to treat. They now universally reprobated that system of oppression under which they had so long groined. They also now expressed their detestation, execration, and abhorrence of that system of government which in this country had met with such enthusiastic applause. The new constitution had been ushered in with a denunciation of all the other systems of government which had been devised in the course of the revolution. They had examined into many of them with a philosophical accuracy; into the causes of many of those unparalleled horrors from which they had drawn many useful lessons. This was the only chance of convincing them that a safe and honourable peace could not be built on any of those baseless theories, which were formerly so much relished in France. They seemed now to be satisfied that they must renounce their desperate projects, and build a system of peace on more solid and durable grounds. Formerly France made a government not only for France, but which they contended was the only lawful government, and which was to be adopted throughout Europe. It was still a question with him, whether the French could put in execution that system of government and that constitution which they had decreed. The Right Honourable Gentleman opposite to him wished to convince the House that we ought to announce our weakness without the delay of twenty-four hours. He said he should be sincerely desirous of peace, the first moment it could be obtained with security and honour to the country. The Right Honourable Gentleman had said, the King's ministers were not sincere in professing a desire for peace. He said he was willing to submit to the imputation of insincerity; to any imputation, however harsh, rather than to sue for a peace that must inevitably bring disgrace and discredit on the country. Mr. Pitt observed, that the Right Honourable Gentleman

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in quoting his Majesty's Speech had not attended very particularly to the words. The Right Honourable Gentleman had endeavoured to shew an inconsistency between his Majesty's Speech at the conclusion of the last Session, and the Speech that had been delivered from the Throne that day. He should therefore move, that the particular parts of both Speeches might be read. [They were read accordingly, after which he pointed out their consistency with great accuracy and ability.] He said he did not wish to blink any part of the question, whether the new Constitution would be put in motion exactly in the form in which it was decreed, whether it would be put off, or what events might have happened, he was sure he could not pretend to foresee.

"That Constitution," said Mr. Pitt, "in the form in which it has been decreed, may have been examined, and may have been put in activity with such acquiescence of the nation, as to enable their representatives to speak on behalf of the people of France; and I have no difficulty in saying, if that event should have taken place, from that time all objections to the form of that Government, and to the principles of that Government—all objections to them as obstacles to negotiation will be at an end. I will also state, with the same frankness, that should that be the termination, whether it will then lead to the issue of competent security, and a reasonable satisfaction to this country, must depend on the terms. If, under those circumstances, by any precipitate and premature desire for peace, from any disposition to under-rate our real strength, or any want of fortitude to bear what I admit to be real difficulties; if we should overlook the ten thousand times more complicated distress of the enemy, and put an end to the advantages they give us, for obtaining peace on just and suitable terms, that would in my opinion be the most fatal event that could possibly happen."

The only question, as he had just stated, would then be, whether the terms of peace were such as we ought to accept. He said he would frankly own, that the issue of this contest would be much less satisfactory than it would have been, if the different powers of Europe had not been more or less wanting to their own and our essential interests. He should regret it for ever. If peace with the present Government of France should be the determination of the business, he should regret that the efforts and resources of the principal nations of Europe, contending against a country in a temporary delirium, and exposing others to destruction, had not been more vigorously

ously and effectually employed, for the purpose of restoring social order, exiled law, morality and religion. But being under the necessity of submitting to those things which he could not controul, he was disposed to look with gratitude to the many favourable circumstances which then existed. If we were but true to ourselves, much might yet be done for the honour and security of the country. Much had been done to destroy those destructive principles that had so long prevailed in France, and laid waste that fine country. The resources of a brave and free people, living under a mild and well-regulated government, and supported by individual industry, were infinite. They had enabled us to defray the heavy expences of the war in which we were engaged, while France had been living on the capital of the country. After the payment of our taxes, though in some degree burthensome, every man in this island, could say his personal safety, his personal liberty, and private property were secure, under the protection of the law. In France, all the natural rights of mankind had been grossly violated. He hoped no man would accuse him of not having been sufficiently explicit.

Another charge that had been brought against his Majesty's ministers was, that they had formerly promised to make peace, and they had violated that promise. Those who urged it, insisted that France was capable throughout the whole war, of maintaining the accustomed relations of peace and amity with other nations, in as much as she actually maintained them with America, Sweden, Denmark, &c. That, therefore, was brought as a proof that she would have maintained those relations with us. But, was it true that France had maintained her neutrality with those countries? In America, some of the subjects of France had endeavoured to excite a conspiracy. The innocent Republic of Geneva had not been taken notice of; but the French interfered with her government. The King of Prussia, &c. had also made peace with the French Republic during the course of the last Session, and as they had conducted themselves with propriety towards that Monarch, hence it was contended, that if there had been a general peace, they would have observed the same line of conduct. But did it follow, because the French did not attack the King of Prussia, when they were most warmly employed, with all their other enemies, that they would have paid the same degree of attention to a general peace, when they were contriving ways and means, how they should subsist from day to day, and from week to week they were in a most unfavourable

favourable situation, for breaking their treaty with the King of Prussia. But if there had been a general peace, then it was natural to expect they would indulge their favourite passions of resentment, ambition, or momentary caprice, to which a military Republic might be supposed to be liable. From the circumstances of the Elector of Hanover making peace with France, it was said he must have been convinced they were capable of maintaining the accustomed relations of amity and peace;—and therefore, why does not he, as King of Great Britain, follow the same line of conduct. Before any gentleman could pretend to argue from Hanover to Great Britain there must be a strong analogy in the situation of the two countries. The territory of Hanover being but comparatively weak, and being exposed to pressing, and immediate dangers it was natural for him to prefer peace to a more pressing danger, than a country more remote, and with resources not to be compared to those of England. These two countries, however, could not follow the same rule of peace and war, unless they were determined to desert all human prudence, and renounce all the principles of plain sense. The rules and forms of that House forbade every member to consider the acts of the King of Great Britain any other than as the acts of his ministers. After a little experience in the new Constitution of France, nothing in his judgment in the form of that Constitution would be an obstacle to a Treaty.

He here observed, that he had been obliged to deviate from the circumstances with which he set out. The French had a greater necessity for peace, and therefore had stronger dispositions for it. The Right Honourable Gentleman had told them, there was a strong disposition for peace last year. That, however, was a question of memory. The Right Honourable Gentleman told the House he did not wish to deal in encomiums on constitutions of which he had no experience. That Right Honourable Gentleman, however, on a former occasion was not quite so cautious, when he broke out upon that glorious fabric of human wisdom, which consisted of little more, as the French themselves had admitted, than subversion. He now hoped the Right Honourable Gentleman had borrowed something of their doubt and hesitation. They had learned important lessons from the misfortunes they suffered; and he trusted the Right Honourable Gentleman would be satisfied with having seen them in France, without wishing to have them tried near home.

Whether this new constitution contained in it hostility and rivalry, whether it effected to be universally binding, must be
be

be judged of from the foundation on which it rested, and the elements of which it was composed. If it was applied to a nation exhausted, the necessity of peace must supersede every other consideration. The principles of it may admit of solid and internal permanence in any treaty that might be formed, and it might be able to give good security that it will not be violated. It had been said, all the good that had been got in the war was opinions. He did not admit that opinions were all that was got, though they were no small part. The Hon. Gentleman had observed on the folly and injustice of making war upon opinions. He denied that he had made war on private opinions, for the purpose of extirpating them. The French contended that they alone, among the nations of Europe, had the only lawful government. If we had subdued the malignity of that opinion, we had vindicated ourselves and Europe from the greatest dangers. So much, then, for this great political consideration.

He came next to another question, on which any practical decision might be difficult, he meant the sense of those internal difficulties his Majesty deeply deplored—the high price of corn. He agreed with the Right Honourable Gentleman, that nothing was more difficult as a subject of legislation. It was most important, and required the immediate attention of the House, in order to get an accurate knowledge of the state of the country, and to see if possibly any measure could be adopted for relieving his Majesty's subjects from the heavy pressure under which they now laboured, and for preventing similar calamities in future. According to the best information government were in possession of last year, when it was mentioned in the House, there was no reason to apprehend that grain would have arisen to such a price. One circumstance that contributed to it, was the circumstance of the lateness of the last harvest, by which means there was a difference of near one month's consumption. This had been spoken of as solely owing to the war. Gentleman talked of great quantities of corn that had been sent abroad for supplying our fleets and armies. He should not then enter into a detail on the subject. Such observations might be attended with the most pernicious consequences, and before such remarks were made, gentlemen would do well to inform themselves how much grain had been removed from domestic consumption, how much grain had been imported, and how many ships loaded with grain had been stopped, and which in time of peace would have gone to other countries. He hoped to hear no more of such observations within those walls,

as they might come too near the sentiments of certain people without doors. One gentleman seemed to have forgot that he was within doors, and whose opinions were such as could not have any place within those walls.

He concluded by observing that his Majesty's ministers would use every means in their power for reducing the high price of grain, and for rendering the situation of the poor more comfortable.

Mr. *Fox* in explanation asked whether it was possible that any person in that House, except the Right Honourable Gentleman, could so far mistake or misconstrue his sentiments, as to suppose that he could wish an insurrection in this country? He believed not. He next adverted to the quotation, which, whether the words were "that affairs *have led* to a crisis," or were verging to a crisis, appeared nearly paramount. As to the capability of the French to maintain peace and amity, he had borrowed his expression from the Journals of that House, where it seemed a government was always deemed admissible for treaty or negotiation, when it had been found to have maintained peace and amity with foreign nations. All this applied to the Elector of Hanover; for, if it was a general proposition, it related as much to him as to the King of Great Britain. As to what he had observed that the depreciation of assignats was an old story, he meant that no fair argument could be deduced from that of the absolute destruction of the French affairs, which was contrary to experience in America directly, and as far as it goes, inasmuch as the French armies have notwithstanding never yet relaxed. Neither had the Emigrants in Quiberon Bay, nor the Austrians in Germany, been able to succeed against them, notwithstanding this amazing depreciation, nor would they have been much happier even though they had been told that Mr. Pitt, the Chancellor of the Exchequer in England, declared the French had no army, because they had no money to support it. As the Right Honourable Gentleman had not said much upon the amendment he hoped it was unexceptionable in its structure.

Mr. *Sheridan* explained, that the Right Honourable Gentleman, by quibbling on the word government, in a comment on one of his passages, had implied that he was desirous to adopt a new constitution. He knew not upon what principle it was that the Right Honourable Gentleman imagined the existence of his administration, and the existence of the constitution, to be the same thing. Mr. *Sheridan* entertained such opposite ideas, that he looked upon the total
annihilation

annihilation of the Right Honourable Gentleman's authority to be the happiest thing that could possibly happen to the Constitution of this country.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

Two Masters in Chancery waited upon the House, requiring its attendance to a conference with the House of Peers.

The *Speaker* informed the House, that this message was informal and irregular, as it had always been the usual practice of either House of Parliament, when it requested a conference with the other House, to state upon what subject the conference was requested.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* moved, that their Lordships be desired to communicate the same.

Mr. Fox thought it very extraordinary when forms were so tenaciously adhered to in so many instances, that they should be neglected in this, and wished particularly that at such a time and in such circumstances, some measure would be adopted to shew their constituents, that their representatives had neither lost their dignity nor independence.

The *Speaker* acquainted the House, that many instances occurred upon the journals of similar incidents, one of which happened in the Session of 1641, when upon the remonstrance of the Commons, the Peers stated in their second Message, that a present conference was requested, and this was judged admissible. The other happened on the 22d of March, 1678, when the remonstrance of the Commons was couched in stronger language. A motion being made and seconded the same language was adopted.

In the interval, Mr. Wilberforce expressed his perfect concurrence with his Right Honourable friend in the Address, the reasons for which he should give at a future opportunity.

The House then divided upon Mr. Fox's Amendment.

For the Address 240

For the Amendment 59

A short debate had taken place between Mr. Windham and Mr. Fox, upon the commitment of the Address. Mr. Windham, had retired for some refreshment, which the heat of the House rendered necessary, and found upon his return, that he had thereby been excluded from making any reply to the observations of the evening, as well as giving his vote upon the question. He, however, censured Mr. Fox's panegyric upon the constitution of 1789, as well as his approbation of the destruction

destruction of the family of Bourbon; and insinuated, that Mr. Fox had a partiality for making constitutional experiments.

Mr. Fox replied, that he did rejoice at the destruction of the family of the Bourbons, because that family had always been inimical to the interests of this country and intrigued against it. He rejoiced moreover, because he thought it would be a fortunate event for this country. As to the experiments which he had made, he wished to know what they were, unless the Right Honourable Gentleman alluded to his co-operation with him in a plan for a parliamentary reform, which he acknowledged he had done, and would do again, if ever the Right Honourable Gentleman should propose any plans of a similar nature. He said he was no projector, but loved the constitution better from its practice than its theory, from which it sometimes departed; and, since his conduct was such, he did not know what the Right Gentleman could mean by his insinuation. For the rest of what had been mentioned that evening, relative to the speedy prospect of peace, he should wait to know what happened at Paris, and obtain something more substantial and authentic.

Mr. Windham and *Mr. Fox* again explained; when the Address was ordered to be committed, and presented by *Lord Dalkeith*, *Mr. Stewart*, and the gentlemen of his Majesty's Privy Council.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

The Masters in Chancery returned with a message from the Lords desiring a present conference on a subject relative to the safety of his Majesty, and the honour and dignity of Parliament.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer then moved that managers be chosen to attend.

The Managers being returned from the conference with the Lords,

Mr. Secretary Dundas reported that they had held a conference with the Lords, in which they had been informed that their Lordships, in consequence of having examined the several persons named, had agreed to address his Majesty as stated in the proceedings of the Lords, and that they desired the concurrence of that House in the Address.

The Speaker said that the Right Honourable Gentleman having only stated the names of the persons examined, and not the substance of their evidence, which in point of strict order ought to be before the House, before they concurred in the Address,

Address, he had to suggest that there were two ways in which the evidence might come regularly before them. The first was by examining the witnesses at their own bar, and the other by requesting that the Lords would lay before them minutes of the evidence as delivered at their bar. Either of these might be adopted as the House thought fit.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said, as he believed there was but one wish in the House on this important affair, he had no doubt but they would deem the latter mode the most expeditious, and therefore moved to that effect; and that Lord Mornington be sent with the Message—which being agreed to

Lord Mornington went out, and returning almost instantly, reported, that in obedience to the orders of that House, he had been up with the Message to the House of Lords, but found that their Lordships had adjourned.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer then moved, that this Message be taken into consideration the next day.—Ordered.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, after a short preface across the table, moved, That the House resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House, to take into consideration the present high price of Corn.—Ordered.

Adjourned at half past twelve.

LIST OF THE MINORITY.

Antonic, Lee, Esq.	Jervoise, C. Jervoise, Esq.
Aubrey, Sir John, Bart.	Kempe, Thomas, Esq.
Baring, Sir F.	Long, Samuel, Esq.
Baring, John, Esq.	Lechmere, Edward, Esq.
Bouverie, Edward, Esq.	McLeod, General
Burch, J. R. Esq.	Maise, Sir William
Byng, George, Esq.	North, Dudley, Esq.
Charch, J. D. Esq.	Pierf, Henry, Esq.
Coke, H. W. Esq.	Plumer, William, Esq.
Coke, Edward, Esq.	Powlett, Powlett, Esq.
Courtenay, John, Esq.	Rawdon, Hon. John.
Crespigny, T. C. Esq.	Russel, Lord John
Crewe, John, Esq.	Russel, Lord William
Curwen, J. C. Esq.	Scadamore, John, Esq.
Dundas, Charles, Esq.	Sheridan, Right Hon. R. B.
Erskine, Hon. Thomas,	Shaw, Cunliffe, Esq.
Featherstonhaugh, Sir H.	Smith, William, Esq.
Fitzpatrick, Right Hon. R.	Spencer, Lord Robert
	Fletcher,

Fletcher, Sir H.
 Francis, Philip, Esq.
 Fox, Hon. J. C.
 Folkes, P. M. B. Esq.
 Glover, Richard, Esq.
 Hare, James, Esq.
 Harcourt, John, Esq.
 Harrison, John, Esq.
 Honeywood, Filmer, Esq.
 Howard, Henry, Esq.
 Hufley, Samuel, Esq.
 Jekyll, Joseph, Esq.

St. John, St. Andrew, Esq.
 Taylor, Clement, Esq.
 Tarleton, General
 Thompson, Thomas, Esq.
 Townshend, Lord John
 Western, C. C. Esq.
 Winnington, Sir Edward
 Wyndham, P. C. Esq.
 Wilbraham, R. Esq.

TELLERS.

Grey, Charles, Esq.
 Whitbread, Samuel, Esq.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

FRIDAY, October 30.

The order of the day being called for, the speech which his Majesty delivered the preceding day from the throne was read.

The Earl of Mount Edgcumbe rose to move an Address to his Majesty. His Lordship began with acknowledging a full consciousness of his inability to do justice to the subject, and that he should have to claim all their Lordships' indulgence. Many events, his Lordship observed, had taken place on the continent since the last session of Parliament, to which the attention of the House would, no doubt, be directed. The accession of the United Provinces to France was an important one, but such was the superiority of our navy, that with that accession the enemy could not act against us. On the banks of the Rhine the enemy, it appeared, had been formidable only when they had not been opposed; when opposition was offered to them, we had to observe with pleasure, that they had been considerably checked, so much so, that there was but little apprehension now from that quarter. In Italy their threatened invasion had been prevented, and their army had been repulsed. We had the complete mastery of the sea, so much so, that we had hardly any enemy to contend with. The destruction of the commerce of the French, the ruin of their credit, and the depreciation of their assignats, made up such a total of distress as left them no hope to be able to continue the contest much longer. [His Lordship gave a short, but comprehensive history of the paper currency

rency of the French.] When the assignats were first issued, which was in the year 1790, the whole amount, he reminded their Lordships, was fixed by the National Assembly at forty-eight millions sterling, and the whole specie of France was then eighty-eight millions sterling. The whole amount now of their paper was upwards of eight times the amount of their specie when at its highest. The louis d'or was at the price of 1600 livres in assignats: so that upon a moderate computation it would cost the French to carry on the war for another year, a sum equal to fourteen hundred millions sterling in assignats;—by this calculation it was impossible to conceive how they can long continue the war.

Another ground of consolation to us, his Lordship said, was, that the system on which they had hitherto proceeded was nearly at an end. A system which once threatened destruction to all Europe. Their new constitution was founded upon a much better principle, for by it property was restored to consequence. Of this constitution, however he would not pretend to predict any thing; it must be left to experience and the test of time; it was however clear from it that the old system which led to such havoc was abandoned. It was from considerations of this kind, that his Majesty had been pleased to declare from the throne, his readiness to treat with any form of government in France upon suitable terms, and he had no doubt but that his Majesty would be willing to treat with any government that wore the appearance of durability. Peace was undoubtedly desirable: but however much we might wish for peace, we must prepare for war, and this was chiefly to be done by continuing our naval superiority; and it was matter of great consolation to us, that should we be compelled to continue the contest, our resources were still great, while those of the enemy were now almost entirely exhausted.

The last object in his Majesty's gracious speech from the throne, his Lordship observed, was the dearth of corn. A subject highly important to the public at large, but particularly to the poor, and upon this we could not but feel sentiments of gratitude towards his Majesty, for his paternal goodness in recommending to his parliament to apply themselves to this subject. They should earnestly endeavour to remedy this grievance, to prevent monopoly, and put a stop to unfair dealing in that article in particular, so as effectually to relieve the crying distresses of the poor. His Lordship concluded with moving an Address to his Majesty in the usual form.

Lord

Lord Walsingham seconded the Address.

He said, it was a frequent custom in that House for the person who seconded the Address to rest the question in a great measure on the argument of the noble Lord who moved it.

That there never was an occasion on which more reliance might be placed than upon the opening of his noble Friend, who had most fully and ably explained to the House the object and the principles of the Address, which he brought forward for their consideration.

And therefore he should have been satisfied to let the subject rest where it was, if it was not reckoned a sort of respect to the motion and to the House to say something further upon the question.

His Lordship observed, that the object of the Address was to thank the King for the various communications contained in his Majesty's Speech, and to express the entire concurrence of the House at their general tendency and result.

That the House could not but feel satisfaction at being told of the general improvement which his Majesty found in the prospect of our affairs, and in the particular instances alluded to in the Speech.

That their Lordships must feel still more satisfied with respect to France, inasmuch as it now appeared that they had not been led away by vain and delusive hopes, but that all that had been foretold seemed to be now literally and strictly coming to pass: namely, that these fluctuating governments upon which they have from time to time been endeavouring to establish themselves could be of no long duration, but must soon moulder away.

And accordingly it was now notorious how much they had suffered in their commerce and in their marine, that their internal government, and above all their finances, were more and more disordered every day, that their people having no confidence in them yielded them no obedience, but were disunited amongst themselves, and were looking out for new rulers; that great events seemed to be impending, and a great crisis seemed to be fast approaching.

Now, what was the use which was made of this situation of affairs? Instead of availing ourselves of this depression of the enemy to carry on the war upon a spirit of national vengeance, and to prosecute it under any circumstances at all events, and to any extent, as it had been industriously circulated it was intended to do; instead of that his Majesty took the earliest opportunity of pledging himself from his Throne

Throne to his Parliament, his People, and to all Europe, that as soon as such a crisis should take place, and that a settled government should be formed, and that under that settled government a fair prospect should be offered of a safe and honourable peace, his Majesty will meet it with the sincerest disposition to treat upon just and suitable terms, that is, upon such terms as will give to the country the real benefits of peace without the expence and burthens of a war, and without the danger of being compelled to an immediate or early renewal of it.

That he was sure their Lordships were all agreed upon one point, namely, that nothing was more to be avoided than a temporary patched up peace, which could tend only to cripple the finances and the trade of the country, without leaving the means of improving the one or the other; or of establishing that sort of confidence between nation and nation, which is necessary for the security and support of their whole political system.

Nor could it be too often inculcated, that by too much eagerness and too much impatience for peace, it would retard and not accelerate the great object which every body had in view, and therefore it never could be expected that in the present moment, when by dint of exertion and expence the army and the navy of this country were at their highest state of superiority, the executive government should lay by and wait for events, instead of prosecuting the war with the utmost vigour and energy as the surest means of commanding peace.

That one thing was most certain, that it could not be the interest of any description of men whatever, to prosecute the war a moment longer than the necessity of the case indispenibly called for it, least of all could it be the interest of ministers to do so, they have great responsibility attached to their situations; they are exposed to endless vexations and disappointments; their task is an invidious and an unthankful one; but if from considerations of their own ease and political security, they were to give way too soon, they would sacrifice the interests of the country, they would betray the trust that is reposed in them, and they would forfeit the confidence of the Parliament and of the nation.

If then the prosecution of the war in the present moment cannot be dispensed with, where is the quarter of the world in which the interests of the country requires its being carried into effect so much as in the West Indies? Whoever will consider the value of those islands, and how large a part of

the commerce of this country they compose, (being not less than one third of the whole) and how much they are connected with our maritime strength, will concur with his Majesty in the expediency of his endeavours to secure, and if possible to extend these possessions.

His Lordship next observed, that although it might be matter of regret, yet it was matter of necessity for his Majesty to order reprisals against the Dutch, because the desperate rulers under whose controul that unhappy country now was, had begun by taking his Majesty's ships, and therefore prudence, policy, and self-defence, required that they should for a time be considered as if they were in a state of war, for it was a duty incumbent on the King to take care that the property of his subjects should not be plundered, nor his flag attacked, without his having recourse to those means which the constitution of the country put into his hands for the national redress.

That he thought the treaty with America should give peculiar satisfaction, because in the moment when France was endeavouring to wrest her from us, and thereby to strengthen herself in proportion as she might weaken us, it was a great object to strengthen our alliance and connection with a country which it should be our policy to consider as having a common commercial interest with ourselves; and therefore he hoped that no pains would be spared to make this new bond of union permanent and indissoluble between the two countries for ever.

That with respect to that most important paragraph in his Majesty's Speech, upon the past and the present state of bread corn in this kingdom, he should say that from the unremitting attention which had been paid to that subject, and from the pains which had been taken to increase the supply, and to diminish the consumption though the pressure certainly had been felt, yet it had been felt as little, and palliated as much as possible; and he had read with particular pleasure the observation of his Majesty, which he thought had been most judiciously made upon the spirit of order and obedience to the laws which had prevailed in this respect, that it was a just tribute of acknowledgement to the behaviour of the nation at large, which had been most exemplary under so severe and trying a calamity; he said the nation at large, because the exceptions were so few, as to bear no proportion to the general bulk of the community; at the same time it was to be considered, that this was an evil felt at this moment by other nations as well as by ourselves, and was ascribable

to common and general, and not to local causes; if however it unfortunately happened, that there should still be reason to apprehend a further scarcity of grain, he trusted the good sense of the people of England should convince them that there was no subject to which the Executive Government and Parliament would lend a more willing and decided attention, and that all possible care would be taken to try every measure which the nature of the subject would admit, to reduce the price of this first great necessary of life, and to prevent the increase of it in future.

The Duke of Bedford said, that in his opinion when an Address was proposed to be carried to the throne, it was more consistent with the dignity of Parliament to adopt a language of its own, instead of adopting the language of the minister, and on the present occasion he should recommend a very different language from that of the Address proposed. He had been accustomed to consider the Speech delivered by his Majesty from the Throne, as the Speech of the minister, and under that impression he should speak of it freely. He found it his duty to call the attention of the House to it, and to propose an Address as the occasion required. The speeches of the two noble Lords, who had just been heard, were the same as the Address itself, and the Address was nothing but an echo of the King's Speech. The noble Earl who moved the Address now before the House, had used much argument on the subject of French assignats. He should not, his Grace said, attempt to follow him in that particular but would carefully avoid it, because he did not sufficiently understand the subject to combat the arguments of the noble Lords. But when the House recollected the language which had been constantly held by ministers since the commencement of the present war, they would find that the inability of the French to continue the contest had been the constant theme, and they would concur with him in admiring the ingenuity of administration in contriving excuses for continuing the war year after year. Some years ago ministers had told their Lordships that the French could not hold out for three months longer; but one thing was observable, practice opposed to theory proved that in proportion as their assignats had been depreciated, the vigour of the French had been increased.

The Speech from the Throne stated, that much improvement had taken place in our situation in the course of the present year. When he heard this he heard it with astonishment. He really wished to know upon what grounds mi-

nisters would attempt to support so fallacious, so idle an assertion. He conceived it to be a coarse attempt to delude their Lordships. A foul, gross, palpable misrepresentation. Improvement in our situation! Where were we to look for it, or where could it be found? In the loss of men, in the increase of debts, in the additional taxes! In the desertion of our Allies? In our disgrace? In the victories of our enemies? We were told indeed that the French had not been able to over-run Italy. He really did not expect to hear this stated as a matter of triumph on our part. If we were to derive great satisfaction from that event, we must be pretty easily satisfied. The next thing he should expect to hear was, that we should derive great satisfaction that we are existing as a nation.

We were told that the successes attending the military operations of our enemies, and the advantages which they have derived from the conclusion of separate treaties, are far from compensating the evils of continuing the war. He was no advocate for wars, and he did not think that victory after victory without one defeat, would compensate for the calamities which war occasions, and therefore, he acknowledged that part of the Speech was true.—But if that was the case even with the victorious party, what was our condition? We had no victory, on the contrary we had suffered many defeats, sustained many losses, and were deserted by most of our allies.

We were told also that, from the embarrassed situation of the French, they anxiously wished for peace; if they did, of which he had no doubt, what must be the wish of the people here, suffering under every distress that the folly and madness of ministers could have heaped upon them. If the French wish for peace, surely the people of England must wish for peace too, if they were not as insane as the authors of their sufferings are wicked. He owned he expected some hopes to be held out to us of advantage when we were told that France was come to a crisis that would produce important events to Europe; but alas, we had already been told by experience, that the projected destruction of France must produce important events to Europe. We were told again, that should this crisis produce such a government in France as was consistent with the tranquillity of Europe, his Majesty would be ready to treat. And then it was hinted, that the present government of France was not such as to be capable of keeping the faith of treaties; this ministers had often said. Did they mean to insinuate it now!—He would venture

venture to say they dared not. They dare not at this time, attempt so gross a delusion on the understandings of their Lordships; if suffered to do this, the next thing they would claim, would be the power of making what peace they pleased; but he trusted their Lordships would that night shew their disapprobation of such attempts, in a manner too decided to give ministers any encouragement to proceed. Indeed there never was any thing solid in the objection against treating with France, on the score of their being unable to preserve the faith of treaties.—Had they not kept faith with America? Had they had not kept faith with Spain, with Prussia, and various other powers? Had they not also maintained neutrality with many powers? Most unquestionably they had, and so they would with us, if our ministers had entered into any negotiation with a Gentleman who had been in this country for some short time; it might have been well for us had he staid a little longer, but he was gone. Ministers, the Duke said, persisted in carrying on this war, without the least regard for any opportunity that might be in their way to negotiate for peace. If their Lordships did not now check them, the evil to this country would soon become a dreadful one. The miseries which it had already brought on the people were so numerous and complicated, that were he to recount them, it would take whole hours to go through the catalogue. He should decline it, for he knew they were too fresh in their Lordships' recollection to need recital.

He then proceeded to take a short view of some of the disasters of the last campaign. First, the expedition to the Coast of France. We had been told that so prevalent was loyalty in France, that if we did but land a prince there, the French would flock to his standard by thousands; a gallant army were collected for that purpose. Madly as this scheme had been planned, it had been still more madly conducted. Emigrants were brought forward and collected from all quarters; some of them drawn out of our prisons. The insolence with which they had been treated here, induced them, to return to their own country upon any terms, and the result was what any man of sense must have expected; in this instance, many brave and illustrious men were sacrificed, who had often protested against the project, but they had no alternative. Large quantities of ammunition and stores were here lost, and at a time when the poor of our own country were either starving or lingering on the precarious bounty of the rich, who sometimes condescended to give them a scanty allowance of the worst of food. Not content however with
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the event of the first expedition. Ministers were determined, it seems, to try a second, and if report spoke truly, it had already failed completely. By this and similar expeditions a large space of the sea had been left open to the enemy, and they took pretty good care to derive the proper advantage from it, as their Lordships well knew.

The Duke said, he must next take notice of his Majesty's communication to the House, with respect to the West Indies. He firmly believed that no man would lay his hand upon his heart and say, we stand now upon a better foundation than we stood on at the commencement of the war. There were sent the flower of the British army, many who had rendered themselves illustrious by their conduct, but whose efforts might after all be useless, for they had not only to contend with an indefatigable enemy, but had also to encounter diseases that were inseparable from an unwholesome climate. What their loss would be he was afraid to calculate.

There remained another part of his Majesty's Speech of which he should take notice, it was that which related to the high price of grain. Upon this topic he confessed he was extremely doubtful whether any Parliamentary interference could be of any avail whatever. There was, however, one way of putting an end to the great distress of the poor, and that was by putting an end to the war, which was the occasion of it; for no one could pretend to say, that the waste of war was not greater, even in feeding the same number of persons, than it would be if each man was in his cottage instead of the field; besides what we were daily giving up to the enemy, what was wasted in camps, and a thousand other ways. Add to this the effect of our conduct in seizing neutral ships laden with corn, which prevented neighbouring states from shipping their wheat.

But these were not all the evils to which we were exposed. We had been deserted by Allies whom we had retained by large subsidies, and we had to contend with an enemy, fitter for the fatigues of war than we are. To add to this we had a prospect of famine; thank God it was not yet so great as was apprehended it would have been at this day; but there was a prospect of its becoming dreadful. All these evils he imputed in common with many, to the corruptness of administration and to their wickedness, but in the opinion of all, to their weakness; and administration, composed of men as incapable of maintaining the true interests of the nation, as of defending their own character; and unless Parliament should exert itself, the country must be undone. They should make
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use of that freedom which had been transmitted to them by *their ancestors*. *They should tell the truth to their Sovereign*. They should tear off the veil which ministers had cast over his eyes, for if he could but once be made acquainted with the wretchedness of his people, he had too much goodness of disposition not to be struck with their sufferings, and to take the only step by which they can be effectually relieved, to give them peace. If the House were to be lulled again by the stupid cry of "Jacobin Principles," or by any other common place words to forget their duty, then indeed the situation of this once flourishing, this once happy kingdom would be——: He might attempt to describe it. But the picture would be too awful; and therefore, here he would close the scene. The Duke proposed in substance the following amendment to the Address.

"To intreat his Majesty to view the state of affairs for the three last years: to consider what Allies have abandoned this country; that many of the British possessions in the West Indies have either been pillaged or rendered insecure; that the expeditions to France have either proved disgraceful or abortive; that the expenditure of blood and treasure has been unparalleled; and that such being the result, the House cannot discharge their duty, without entreating his Majesty not to act on the opinion that the French Government cannot preserve the relations of peace and amity; but that his Majesty will take decisive and immediate measures to enter into a negotiation for peace, without adverting to the government of France; and that if the present government refuse to treat, that House will persevere in a vigorous prosecution of the war."

Lord Grenville rose to reply, and began his speech with declaring, that such advice as the Noble Duke had recommended had never before been given to ministers. He had listened with attention to the Noble Duke in expectation of hearing some new arguments in favour of our entering at this time into a negotiation for peace, but his expectation had not been realized. His Majesty's servants were now called upon at once to forsake their honour and the interest of their country, and to prostrate both at the feet of France. Let their Lordships a little consider what was stated by the Noble Duke, in answer to one of the most able speeches he had ever heard from the mover of an Address. The Noble Duke asked wherein our improvement consisted? He had said, that we are at this time not nearer the point than when we commenced, and that his Majesty's servants were not warranted
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in stating, that our condition is materially improved. They had told parliament by his Majesty's speech (and he was ready to argue the point in that way, for certainly it was perfectly constitutional to make ministers responsible for every word in the speech from the throne) they had told parliament that our prospect was materially improved. They had recited circumstances in proof. They had stated that offensive operations meditated against Italy by the French, had been defeated. Was that, or was it not, a material improvement? Would any man deny it? Would any man deny that France was stated last year, and that too by the Noble Duke and others who opposed administration, to be on the point of over-running Italy, and that if they did, the prospect would be alarming in consequence of it? Was that true, or was it not? Now the French had been checked, and he would ask again; and appeal even to the Noble Duke for an answer; was not our prospect materially improved by that check? He would ask their Lordships to take the side of Germany. The French had crossed the Rhine, and they proceeded a considerable length on a narrow space, and for some time they were not resisted; when they had been resisted, they fell back and were afterwards compelled to raise the siege of Mentz, there they now only talk of another campaign, not of any active operation in this. Was not this an improvement in the situation of affairs? The Noble Duke surely therefore deserted his usual accuracy, when he insisted that our situation was not materially improved. He would refer also to our naval superiority. He would ask whether our operation on the Dutch fleet, and on the French fleet, were or were not improvements on our situation? A French fleet had been met, defeated, and blocked up in the harbour of Toulon for many months, and then a small squadron of that fleet was able to escape and take one ship of the line of ours, and part of the convoy. If we were to be told that we were not superior, while one ship of the enemy can escape, then our superiority was not established. We had met the Brest fleet, captured many of their ships, chased them into port, and there kept them blocked up. In fact our naval superiority had been more decidedly established since the last year, than at any former period of our history.

Such was the situation of this country, and yet a British minister was called upon to advise a British king not to say one word of satisfaction at all this. But this was not all the advantage we had obtained over the enemy. Were Noble Lords aware of the destruction of the commerce of the French,

French. The noble Duke treated one part of the subject in a manner that was not quite consistent with his character for information. He said, he did not chuse to say much on French assignats, because he knew but little of them; that was not the cause of his passing them by, for if he chose to apply his mind and his great talents to the subject, he might soon know them well. Nobody could justly accuse the noble Duke of ignorance on any political topic: he said but little on them because he did not chuse their Lordships to think long on them; it did not suit the amendment which the noble Duke proposed, and therefore he passed that topic by with a mere glance. The amendment proposed was no more than calling on their Lordships to surrender entirely to France and put all we had in our power in the hands of the enemy. The original Address, on the contrary, appeared to him to be such as favoured the interest of all Europe. He desired the House to compare the situation of the two countries. This country, if driven to a further progress of the war, could bear it, for we had still great resources. Whereas the enemy was almost totally destitute of any. What had been the resources of the enemy? Assignats. To assignats the French revolution owed its success, and with their fall would expire the whole system of that Revolution. To this point they were now rapidly running. In this respect the situation of France, he said, was materially changed since last year. During that period the depreciation of the assignats had increased in the ratio of 16 to 1, and all other property in the same proportion. He did not advance it as an opinion of his own, or as the result of his own reasonings, when he affirmed, that unless the number of assignats in circulation was diminished, the country would be totally ruined, and the farther prosecution of the war, on their part, rendered impracticable. He gathered this information from men of every party and principle among the enemy themselves, who in their successive struggles for power had been called to assume the direction of these affairs. Were individual authority to communicate any strength to the general concurrence, he would adduce the opinion of a man of considerable ability, whose weight, however unwilling he might be to acknowledge it in other matters, he could rely upon on the subject of French finance. General Monteciquieu, to whom he alluded, was certainly a man of talents. He had been the supporter, if not the projector, of the system of paper credit at its commencement, and now, upon his return to his country, he had devoted himself to dis-

cover a remedy for the evils, and the dangers which the unlimited extension of that system had occasioned.— Even he despaired of success; and what were to be the sentiments of their Lordships, when they saw the opinions they were also capable of judging upon the point? General Montesquieu had written a memorial on the subject, recommending and enforcing the immediate necessity of withdrawing a great proportion of assignats from circulation, and out of 13 milliards to leave only 3 milliards. The circulation, he said, had been encreased since Montesquieu wrote, in a period of only four months, five more milliards; and at length the Committee of Finance had resolved to call in the whole assignats, and break the plates to pieces. When the paper currency was introduced, the revolution could not have been supported without its assistance, nor the great successes have been obtained which the French had been able to achieve. Weakened as they were at present by the severity of their losses and the extravagance of their exertions, it was impossible that France could any longer maintain the extraordinary establishment which had rendered her so formidable. Every writer on the subject of paper currency, agrees that such an enormous mass, so little proportioned to any solid capital, must at length accomplish the utter ruin of a state. This the Convention had confessed, and had again admitted the necessity of employing coin, which it would be impossible for them to obtain. He explained the inconvenience which the French army sustained, the officers being paid in assignats, while the privates received one penny of their pay in money, and which had occasioned a petition and remonstrance from the officers, complaining that the privates were thus better paid by the difference of the value between the coin and the assignats; a circumstance, he said, which would infallibly disgust the army, and perhaps occasion some serious catastrophe. If it could be any satisfaction to behold our enemies exhausted, and approaching to a point at which they would cease to be dangerous; if it was any satisfaction to be carried nearer to the period of a secure peace, we enjoyed these advantages, and could say, that our situation was improved. By the exertions we had made, and by the distresses we had caused to be felt, the desire of peace had become general in France. Her internal state, he said, was changed. Though he could not go so far as to call the principles now professed good, they were comparatively so. He contrasted the present system with that of terror, expressed his detestation of the ~~and~~ and said that the new constitution was a miserable and imperfect

imperfect copy of ours, with some strange principles mixed up in it; but with all its defects, it was a valuable acquisition to this country, as it might lay the foundation of peace. With regard to the passage in the Speech which had given rise to some observation, that his Majesty "was unable to foresee the consequences of the present crisis," he would ask, What language it would have been becoming to have employed?—It would have been highly improper to have expressed a determination to negotiate upon terms short of those which this country had a right to expect. It was sufficient that the Speech held out an assurance of a readiness to accept such terms of accommodation, as might be consistent with honour and security. He considered the advice which the Noble Duke wished to present to his Majesty, as highly impolitic and extraordinary. To negotiate with an expiring government could yield no security for the permanence of any peace, which might be concluded. It was not possible to know the sentiments which the new Legislature might entertain, or what disposition they might have to fulfil the engagements of their predecessors, and he put the case that a negotiation were commenced and in progress with the present Convention, and the new Legislature should refuse to fulfill its conditions. From the situation of Paris, he said, and the distractions of party, it was impossible to form at present any permanent accommodation. The best, and indeed the only good feature in the noble Duke's amendment, was its utter impracticability. How could they carry to the foot of the Throne advice, which his Majesty could not practise? Perhaps at the moment an ambassador was dispatched to Paris he might find the streets streaming with blood, and it might depend upon the issue of a battle, whether he was to recognize as the Government, the Convention, the Committees, or the Citizens at the French Theatre. And could the Noble Duke, expect to obtain the concurrence of that House to such an advice, and to prevail upon them to abandon the declarations which they had so repeatedly and solemnly adopted? Undoubtedly the condition of France at all times deeply affected the interests of Great Britain; it would therefore be repugnant to the welfare and honour of the state to give advice to his Majesty similar to that moved by the Noble Duke, advice justified by no distress, no pressure, no exigency. The amendment of the Noble Duke, he said, likewise went to fix upon ministers a responsibility of the severest kind, if they should be unable to carry into effect the measures which it recommended to be adopted.

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There was one point in which he was ready to confess his feelings were peculiarly interested, and he was sensible how superfluous it was to employ much time in pressing it upon the attention of their Lordships:—a scarcity of grain, it was feared, existed in the country, for the alleviation of which every care should be bestowed. Yet it could little conduce to the happiness of the people to inform them that this calamity was occasioned by the war. And the more especially when the fact was directly the reverse. Famine could not be prevented by bearing the unprovoked aggression of our enemies. Much of the scarcity was owing to the present unproductive situation of the Netherlands, whose new government seemed unfavourable to agriculture. By the war and its commencement, when this country was forced into it, the Netherlands were two years kept out of the hands of the French, and the ports of Holland prevented from being sooner shut against us. The disaster at Quiberon had not occasioned the scarcity of provision, as he could assure the House that the grain, which upon that occasion fell into the hands of the enemy, was not, as erroneously asserted, conveyed from this country, but consisted chiefly of the cargoes of some of the American ships, which had been seized in their way to France. He vindicated that expedition from the censures it had received. The bad success of it was, he said, solely to be ascribed to the treachery of emigrant corps, an event which ministers could not foresee, and for which they cannot be responsible. They had confided the selection to the emigrant officers, and to whom could they have confided it, with so much probability of its being wisely made? His Lordship concluded with observing, that there was no man more desirous of Peace than he was; and the Speech afforded a reasonable expectation, that, when suitable terms of peace were offered, his Majesty would not refuse them.

The *Marquis of Lansdown* began with declaring, that the little success, that had uniformly attended his efforts in that House, with a view to caution ministers in time against the mischievous and alarming consequences of the war, had much disinclined him from pursuing so fruitless a system any longer, and indeed a variety of reasons co-operated to make him desirous of continuing in the country; the critical situation of affairs however induced him to do a violence to his inclinations; their Lordships might rest assured, therefore, that nothing but a deep sense of his duty compelled him to appear there, after having so repeatedly declared his sentiments on the conduct and progress of the war, sentiments delivered

with so much moderation, and which had been received with so much arrogance. He declared, he had lately read over every line that he had spoken on the subject of the war, to be found in the publications of the times, and he did not find the smallest occasion to retract a single syllable. At its commencement it was a question whether the national honour should be preserved entire, whether Germany should be endangered or Holland lost? His apprehensions on each of those topicks had been realized, Holland was gone, Germany in danger, and our arms disgraced. These were facts that were obvious, facts that all men, even of the lowest rank, were enabled and qualified to decide. He confessed his astonishment on finding that his Majesty had been advised to declare his satisfaction at the improvement in the prospect of our affairs, but much as he was surprized at such a declaration, he had been not a little amused with the explanations given by the noble Secretary of State. When he had formerly prophesied the consequences that would result from the conduct of our allies, his observations had been heard with impatience and disgust. When he presumed a little to doubt the security we had for the sums lavished on the King of Prussia, the noble Secretary had been indignant that the honour of so good and so faithful an ally should be suspected, or that the zeal and steadiness of the King of Sardinia should be questioned. The noble Secretary of State chose to forget all these circumstances, and even exulted in the national success, because the prophecies had not been completely fulfilled, and things were but half as bad as had been predicted. This taking credit for what had not been lost, this improvement in our situation reminded him of a story which afforded a pleasant illustration, and was well known to every body who had served in Germany in the seven years war. Marshall ——— but he would not mention his name, was at faro in the Marquis of Granby's tent one evening, where he was present, as indeed he too often found himself, and he said to him, "Well Marshall, what have you done to night? done (said the Marshall) why I have lost 50l." Upon which he expressed his surprise, and said "I'm sure I saw you win," "Yes replied the Marshall so I have, but I've lost 50l. because when I sat down, I was determined to win 100l. and I have only won 50l. therefore I am a loser of 50l." In like manner the noble Secretary of State made out the improvement in our situation. Only half the misfortunes that had been foretold had taken place, and therefore he boasted of our good fortune. Upon this principle, the events of the war considered,

considered, our successes since last session had been brilliant indeed, and upon this principle, if ministers were told they would lose the East Indies, they might if the event happened so, make it a boast that they had not lost the whole but only the coast, or in the West Indies they might probably be able to say, "You told us, we should lose all our Islands, but it is no such thing, we have only lost one or two of them." But what was our good fortune? Was it an improvement of our situation, that the French had got possession of Luxembourg, of Dusseldorf, and Mannheim? Was it an improvement that the Elector of Bavaria, and most of our allies had made peace with the French? That the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel, our faithful ally, no sooner received his arrears, which he had contrived to get of the present ministers, although the successive administrations for thirty years together had refused to pay them, than he also left us and made peace with the common enemy? With such facts as these staring him in the face, how many years of such improvement did the noble Secretary of State think the nation would be able to bear? In the Speech from the Throne, the Marquis observed, there were some faint glimmerings of peace. These the noble Secretary of State trusted would be examined with candour, and that the House would be too complaisant to interfere with his Majesty's ministers in the way in which peace was to be made. He owned he had little confidence in the future conduct of ministers, judging of the future by the past; but on the present occasion he was disposed to take them at their word. If it were true that France was tired of the war and panted for peace, why did not ministers come down with a peace in their hands? If their boasts of improvement in our situation and of temporary success were founded, this was of all others the most favourable moment for negotiation. The Empire could only be saved by peace, and he repeated what he had taken the liberty of urging last session, viz. that it was of the utmost importance to preserve the Empire entire. The French still kept possession of the German side of the Rhine, and the King of Prussia was to be dreaded. If peace were delayed, perhaps that wary Monarch might avail himself of the circumstances of another campaign, and execute the projects, which he might possibly be meditating at this moment. In 1782 when a noble Earl near him, (Lord Howe) had faced the combined fleets of France and Spain so much to his own honour, and to the advantage of his country, the favourable opportunity was seized on, a negotiation was instituted, by the means of which his Majesty was enabled

enabled to come forward with that Speech, which would remain a lasting glory to the annals of this country; so convinced was he of this, that no consideration upon earth could induce him to forego the share he had in these transactions.

If ministers wished ever so much to negotiate for peace, they said they could not, asking, with whom are we to treat? Let them ask the Elector of Hanover, he had left them, although he of all our Allies, might have been expected to have staid with them a little longer. He had found parties to treat with, and so might they, if they chose it. The old story of the exhausted state of the French finances had been brought forward by the noble Secretary of State, who had dedicated much of his speech to display the extent of the depreciation. He wished some of his Majesty's ministers had paid some attention to the finances of this country. If those of France were not unlimited, the finances of Great Britain were not without bounds. One symptom of an alarming nature had been talked of. He begged to know if the taxes of this year had proved productive? If the taxes failed, all was over. While ministers were thoughtlessly lavishing such prodigious sums, it would become them to consider that circumstance, and to recollect that the people could only bear taxes to a certain extent, and that a few more would weigh down the scale. To attempt to make an impression on St. Domingo was not easy. There was little chance indeed of doing it, and Lord Chatham knew it so well, that in his seven years, he never would attempt it. As to the West Indian armament, he understood it was the worst arranged, and the worst equipped that had ever gone from this country, and would not be fit to sail for several weeks to come. Ministers were too confident in regard to the success of this expedition. It was impossible in the course of four months to do enough with it to put our affairs in a better posture for negotiation, than they were at present. After all were they sure that one worn-out Island or two, were worth the expence of such an armament? The French might likewise continue feeding their colonies by sending out troops and disappoint us. Their plan of sending out ship after ship from time to time, was what our ministers should have followed, but they generally waited so long, that the troops, when they got to the West Indies, arrived there too late to be of any use. If the discussion that had taken place in the Convention was to be relied on, it did not appear that they meant to give up the Netherlands; at least it did not seem likely that they would exchange them for West India settlements, as the French were powerful enough
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in that quarter of the globe, not only to retain their own Islands, but to invade ours. The language held out in the speech, though rather more pacific than that of the last session, he was satisfied meant nothing more than a display of the dexterity of ministers in getting on with the war for another year. Last year every thing was to be achieved by one decisive vigorous effort, now the new order of things in France was relied on. Such had been the policy of Lord North with his American war, who regularly brought on his measures from year to year, and thus manœuvred on to the year 1782. One year he had his Boston Port Bill, and that was held out as likely to do every thing; another year he had his Prohibitory Bill, and that was to put an end to the war. Then again he brought forward his famous Conciliatory Propositions, and selected a noble Earl * from that House, whom he did not then see in his place, and some members of the other House, one of them a pretty violent man † in opposition, to send over as Commissioners to America. Lord North, he said, knew mankind, and had wit and humour about him to enable him to get through with his plans. He used to play off one set of men against another, for there were the *violent* and the *most violent*; to one he held one sort of argument and the exact reverse of it to another, thus to some, he said, such and such a measure was to do all by concession and conciliation, to others that its operation would be coercive and compulsory. After all this evasion the war went on with great and unrelaxed vigour, and continued for several years. The boar that was then to be hunted was good humoured and witty, but indolent, but the present boar was a different animal, he possessed the real qualities of the creature, and was, he believed, of the true breed.

The depreciation of assignats about which the noble Secretary of State said so much, was not of the consequence that he seemed to imagine. It was clear that he inclined to the old exploded idea, that money was the sinew of war. An idea contradicted by the best writers on the subject ancient and modern. What said Livy upon it? He told us of three things that constituted the sinews of war, good soldiers, good commanders, and good fortune, all of which the French possessed in an eminent degree. He therefore would oppose the opinion of Livy to that of General Montesquieu, of whom the noble Secretary had spoken in such warm strains of applause. Had he ventured to have bestowed so much praise

* Earl of Carlisle.

† The late Governor Johnstone.

on a Frenchman, he should have incurred suspicion, and even now he would not follow the noble Lord as he wished to preserve moderation. But he repeated what he had before said, that nothing in point of resources was beyond the reach of a revolutionary government, whereas regular governments had their limitations in point of resources beyond which they could not go. He trusted therefore, that what had happened to the old French government would serve as a warning to ministers of the fatal consequences of improvidently exhausting the revenues of this country. With respect to the eulogy, which the noble Secretary of State had applied to the new constitution of France, he did not object to it, but hoped the French people would derive every possible happiness from their espousals with this Lady Bride. The Marquis ridiculed the idea of their being any difficulty in settling the ceremony of which should send ambassadors to negotiate. The French he was sure entertained not any prejudices on so narrow a ground. God only knew, what might be the consequence of pursuing the present measures till the next meeting of Parliament, and therefore the sooner the negotiation was set on foot the better. Even now the Germanic constitution, the integrity of which being preserved, was of so much importance to the balance of Europe, was already shaken to its centre, and its total demolition must ensue if an end were not put to the present critical conjuncture of affairs. He hoped therefore that the moment was approaching when the eyes of men would be opened, and that his Majesty as King of Great Britain would follow the same conduct that he had adopted as Elector of Hanover.

There remained one great topic in the Speech, and in the Address, on which he had not touched, and he owned he was perfectly astonished to hear the noble Secretary of State say it was a delicate matter and ought not to be agitated; he meant the high price of corn and the situation of the poor. That, he said, was the main cause of his being then present. The poor were actually starving. In January last he had produced a paper, which he had at that moment in his pocket, drawn up by a respectable magistrate, a clergyman of the West of England, who had signed his name to it, at his request. He had read it to their Lordships in January, and it stated, that the poor had nothing but bread and water to exist upon. The case, he was sorry to say, was much altered for the worse. They had now no bread to eat. Formerly his stating this melancholy fact was heard with impatience and deemed jacobinical, and so what he had then

said, might even now be considered. He heartily wished he had not such a tale to tell their Lordships, but the state of the poor was miserable beyond description, and when he said so, he spoke from his own knowledge, having taken every possible means to ascertain the fact by enquiry among the poor, who lived in his neighbourhood in the country. He declared, he had endeavoured to obtain as much information as he could collect, meaning to state it to their Lordships, but he had carefully abstained from saying any thing to feed the hopes of the poor, or hold out any promise that might delude or mislead them. As might naturally be expected, he had heard a great number of remedies proposed, but only one means of curing the evil, that appeared to him at all feasible, and even respecting that, he begged their Lordships to understand that he had not made up his mind. The remedy to which he alluded was to rise the price of labour, and increase the wages of the poor in proportion to the price of corn. It had been laid down by those who had made themselves masters of the subject, that a poor man could not maintain his family upon less than a bushel of wheat a week, the idea therefore was, that the price of a labouring man's wages should always be the amount of a price of a bushel of wheat. In Wiltshire, the Marquis said, the price of labour was seven shillings a week, whereas at present wheat was fourteen shillings a bushel. In conyering with the poor on the subject, he had always endeavoured to make them easy, first by relieving them as far as he could, and next, by endeavouring to convince them that any attempts to procure relief by force would only add to the evil, and subject them to fatal consequences. In general he had succeeded in this, very well, but there was one point which he found their understandings were not equal to, and that was, the bringing them to a sense that stopping the transit of corn, would only lead them into a scrape, and bring on new obstacles to their being relieved. All these distresses he must impute in a great measure, if not wholly, to the continuance of the war; and it was so obvious, that he was astonished that the noble Secretary of State should have denied the fact. He begged to ask if the increased consumption by the numerous armies, the prodigious waste in camps, and in the ships, in the latter of which a constant traffick is kept up by the sailors and marines with the purser, to whom they sell their provisions for liquor, the great quantity sent abroad to feed the emigrant troops, &c. that had fallen into the hands of the enemy, by their getting possession of our magazines, &c. were not all consequences of the war, and of the war only? Add to this, did not the war on the Continent operate

operate most fatally to abridge the usual produce of the soil? Brabant and Flanders, and Poland, which used to supply so much corn to the rest of Europe, now, in consequence of the military operations in those fertile countries, experience a total extinction of their usual cultivation, agriculture being at a stand-still in each of them. The war also caused a dearth of other provisions; the poor, even in the midland and distant counties, could no longer supply themselves with bull beef, which they used to buy at two-pence-halfpenny a pound, all the cattle being bought up for Government and driven to Portsmouth; there to be either slaughtered or shipped for the use of the army and navy. The restoration of peace in short was the only real and effectual remedy that could be applied to all these grievances. Peace alone would restore that old English good humour, which the pressure of misery and want had for the present suspended. It was upon these grounds, and because it recommended peace, the Marquis declared that the amendment should have his support.

The Earl of Mansfield supported the Address. His Lordship promised to confine himself to a single point, and to be extremely short. The arguments that had been used respecting the high price of corn were what he meant to allude to. He differed entirely from those noble Lords who argued, that the scarcity of grain was produced by the war, except they meant to assert that the more people that were out of the country, who consumed the grain of foreign powers, the greater the deficiency must be at home. He disapproved of the amendment in every respect, and was only surprized that it should have come from the quarter it did; they had been asked, why at the present moment they had not, instead of holding out a prospect of peace, brought peace in their hands? He would ask in return, where was this new constitution? Could any man tell what it might be? This fair lady, of whom the noble marquis had said so much as a favourite of ministers, has not yet unveiled her charms, and it was not to be expected they could know enough of her to be so forward in the negotiation as the noble Lord wished. His opinion of the amendment, and the principles it held forth, was shortly this: That from the moment the House adopted it, they would lay the axe to the root of every thing like negotiation, and take away every possibility of peace. Even Sir William Temple, if he were taken out of his grave could not negotiate peace under such an amendment. If they acted wisely, they ought to be guided by the prudence of those who had gone before them, and when they had not the power of effect-

ing what was the object of their wishes at once, it was the duty of ministers to keep back the *ultimatum* of their negotiation with a manly perseverance and steadiness of pursuit. He dwelt upon the comparative situations of this country and France, considering the latter to be in the most degrading terms of distress. Some noble Lord had said, they thought that money was not necessary to carry on war. He never before heard that the not having money to pay large armies with, was the way to keep them faithful and steady to the cause for which they had been raised. The noble Marquis had asked, What said Livy? They had all read what Livy said on that subject, and he would ask those noble Lords whether they thought they could find a successful army without pay. He argued on the uncertainty of the actual situation of France, and declined giving any opinion as to the permanency of the new constitution, even if it was already adopted. He conjured them not to proceed too far in this dark and starless night, but to wait the dawn of returning day. He knew there were different opinions respecting the question, Whether it was the interest of France or not to retain Belgium? some had been punished in that country for thinking so, while greater authority had asserted otherwise. Here the noble Lord read a long extract from an introductory speech of Boissy d'Anglas on this subject. After which he concluded, with recommending a hardened honesty in all their proceedings, and said, that if the amendment was at all to be entertained in that House, it ought to be followed up by a motion for the removal of ministers.

The *Earl of Darnley* said, he had in the former periods of the war, given his support and confidence to ministers, because he thought it a necessary war, and dreaded the introduction and prevalence of French principles; from these alarms he was now to see obstinacy relieved, and did not wish in any part of the House against concluding a peace. He had a long time disapproved of the expedition against France, and particularly the last business of Quiberon, and was determined to take the first opportunity of stating that opinion in public. He confessed he was not perfectly satisfied with the amendment, because it painted our situation much worse than it was, at the same time, he must declare, that, there were parts of the Address that he could not agree to. He knew not where to find our naval superiority since the glorious instance of the first of June last year, and as to our successes in the West Indies, he really did not know what they were. He concluded with some observations on the scarcity

of grain so much to be lamented, and declared that upon the whole, he must prefer the Address to the amendment.

Lord Grenville said a few words in explanation, in consequence of something that fell from Lord Lansdown.

The Duke of Grafton declared he could only have been induced to rise from sense of duty, and a consideration of the very serious and alarming state in which every man of common sense must see that the country was plunged, from the obstinacy of ministers acting upon a system of ignorance and blunder; this he felt the more and more as he reflected on the events that had taken place; this had called him up, and all they had seen and heard corroborated the opinion he then gave and had given on former occasions. He knew enough of mankind to know that different men would ascribe the same events to different causes; but however different the causes of our disasters might be, they all and individually must confess that the consequences were the same. Their Lordships would do him the justice to recollect, that he had spoken his mind freely on former occasions, and he declared he had not at that day, a single word to retract of any thing he had said; he believed, that some great convulsion was to be expected; it was his public and private opinion, known to the world, as well as to his own family.

He approved highly of the noble Duke's Amendment, it was wrong to call it stipulating for negotiation, when it was notorious to Europe, that peace was absolutely necessary, and particularly known both to France and this country, from the public circumstances that had taken place. This country from a continuance of a ruinous war, conducted by the most distracted councils, and attended by the most disgraceful events, was so shaken that nothing but peace could restore it. A nation rich in treasure, which had been wasted and squandered with a degree of heedless profusion that had brought it to the brink of ruin. In this assertion he was fairly warranted by the encreasing accumulation of the national debt, for when the interest of that debt became equal to the rents, the country must be in an alarming situation indeed. The burthen of taxes, if no more were laid on, was immense. Many he allowed were judiciously chosen, but yet there were some, that though not intended to affect the poorer sort of people, fell very heavy upon them; there were two, for instance, generally supposed to affect the rich only, but if examined, they would be found to bear upon the middle class, and those of very slender incomes; among others, the tax on wine, which had been carried, in his opinion, far too high.

high. A country curate with 40*l.* a year, allowing only a gill of port-wine a day, would have to pay 3*l.* of taxes; and from the tax on malt, a poor labouring peasant must pay the same sum of 3*l.* per annum, for his allowance of three pints of ale per day, these were not exaggerated complaints, they were founded upon fair calculations which he had actually made. And in this situation, not more highly or strikingly coloured than it actually was, what had we to look at on the other side of the picture? Nothing, in his opinion, but a prosperous and well protected commerce could ever enable this country to wade through the difficulties and deep calamities into which she was plunged. If it was said, that we still possessed a great share of commerce, he hoped it had met with much protection during the present war, two recent, and very great captures would be a sufficient answer to the assertion; captures that fell a sacrifice to the foolish, wild, and mistaken prospects of men who seemed lost to every sense of duty that they owed their country; who, instead of following the old, wise, and prudent step of securing our own commerce, and endeavouring to destroy that of the enemy, had preferred to that the frantic and Quixotic project of conquering and setting up royalty in France, a fancy that never once entered the mind or brain of any but the present ministers and their adherents. Now though not a week ago, they had relinquished that opinion; but their opinions were so changeable, and hung on so small a thread, that if they possessed the most insignificant fishing town in that country, they might still enter in the same idle speculation. An immediate peace, or something like peace, every Englishman, from his love of England, at this moment must wish to see carried into effect, and he trusted in God it speedily would be so. There were many other subjects in the present state of the nation, that claimed much and serious attention; nothing, his Grace said he dreaded more than the try, infringements upon the laws and constitution of the country by the frequent introduction of military force, and he reminded the House of the noble exertions of that able and honest judge, Lord Chief Justice Holt, who always recommended and succeeded in quelling riots without calling in military force. Miserable indeed would be the state of that country in which the execution of the laws depended on the military!

He advised ministers and the House not to think too lightly of the opinion of the people without doors: the American war ought to be sufficient warning on that head; and the complaints

complaints of the people were loud, they generally were not ill-grounded. What must the people think of the extraordinary and exorbitant increase of sinecure places, pensions, and lucrative appointments, and the manner in which they saw them bestowed; necessary in some degree perhaps they might be, while we persisted in carrying on the war, but from such effects who can convince the body of the people of the necessity of such a war?

On the subject of assignate, so much and so often had they been mentioned, that he had little to say. But what must the country think, when they read the gazettes, the men and the money which they saw was expended in a manner unprecedented? and having mentioned the word precedent, he wished their Lordships would attend a little more to it than they had done of late; the dilemma of the preceding night should be a lesson to them. Spain and Hanover having concluded peace, and Berlin, not before the loan had been given, where was the interest that England had in continuing the war, or how much wiser were not those powers than we? After much other argument urged with great emphasis and solemnity, the Duke declared, that he was decidedly for his noble Friend's amendment.

The *Marquis of Townshend* rose to reply to that part of the Duke of Grafton's speech, in which he had spoken of the propensity to entrust the execution of the laws to the enforcement of the military, and had cited the anecdote of Chief Justice Holt's having interfered with the civil power, and put an end to a riot without the aid of soldiery. The *Marquis* said, in Norfolk where he resided, if any tumult or disturbance took place, the gentlemen of the county, with the assistance of the yeomanry which formed constitutional force of the kingdom, always came forward themselves to disperse rioters and restore the publick tranquillity. The *Marquis* dilated on this point, in order to remove any prejudices or jealousy against the military, that might have been imbibed from the manner in which the noble Duke had stated his expression of regret.

The *Earl of Lauderdale* delivered his sentiments with his accustomed ardour of speech, and after paying a warm compliment to the eloquent harangue of the Duke of Bedford, said, that they had been witnesses that night to most extraordinary vindications on the part of the ministry. The noble Secretary of State had forgotten all the pledges which he had last year given—all the promises he had made, and all the prospects he held out. He forgot what mighty things the Emperor was to accomplish for us, in return for our loan—he forgot what

what Spain was to do—what Sardinia—what the German powers. He forgot the panegyrics on the fidelity of the King of Prussia, and the constancy and vigour of all our allies. He forgot all this, but he remembered exactly how many evils had been predicted, and because they had not been all fulfilled, our situation was improved! and this was the ground for the extraordinary satisfaction which his Majesty had expressed. It was in vain that he endeavoured to discover the sources of this satisfaction. It could not be in our triumphs, for we had met only with disaster and defeat; nor could it be in the internal condition of this country, since the lamentable scarcity of provisions was most properly recommended by his Majesty to the serious consideration of the House. Our naval superiority was made a subject of boast; and the Noble Secretary had said, that never in our history had this superiority been so decided. Did he forget the history of the year when his present Majesty came to the throne, when in his Speech he said, that the small remnant of the French navy had been blocked up in their ports during the whole of the summer? It could not be said that this was the case now; very recent experience had shewn the contrary, and the little protection given to our trade did not prove that our superiority had been directed with so much skill and vigour as to make it useful. Was it the conduct of our allies that had given satisfaction to his Majesty? Was the conduct of the Elector of Hanover satisfactory to the King of Great Britain, or was it in the situation of Corsica that he considered an improvement of our situation? It had been confidently asserted that our gaols for prisoners of war had been opened in order to recruit men for the late expedition to France: he would ask them where they had recruited M. de Puifaye, the commanding officer of that operation? They said they were not responsible for the horrid catastrophe of that expedition; on what principles they founded that assertion he knew not, for surely to select a man as a commander, who had never in any military service reached a higher rank than that of a captain, and to place him over a number of the most distinguished and gallant veterans, and to do this in opposition to all the remonstrances that were made by men of the first character, was an act for which ministers ought to be responsible; especially when it was remembered that they had confided to the officer in question immense quantities of stores and provisions at the very moment of scarcity in this kingdom. He had no confidence, he said, in the equipment, or of promise which the present speech gave to the

the country. It was much less favourable than the hopes held out in the speech at the close of the last session, where there was an unconditional pledge that His Majesty's ministers would treat in case of a change in the situation, which was said to be probable. But now the pledge was clogged with a condition, that the French must not only have a fit government, but they must also be the first to offer negotiation. With the eternal theme of assignats he would not embroil or embarrass himself. The inferences drawn from their depreciation were, he believed, founded in false reasoning; at any rate they were fallacious and not to be relied on. If assignats were extinct, the French would not be beaten. The wealth of a nation consisted in three matters—their stock, their labour, and their soil. Say, that the first of these was extinguished, the two others would remain, and they had all seen what a people could accomplish with these two left, when the first was gone. America had given a memorable instance of it, and France had shewn in the last campaign, that the depreciation of her paper took nothing from her vigour, nor from her exertions. With regard to what the ministers now called a favourable crisis in France. It was a crisis as productive of blood as any of the periods of the revolution that went before it, and this led him to distrust their declarations. They pretended regard for the new constitution of France: they ought not to be sanguine on the hopes they expected from it. Even their own boasted constitution for Corsica, an improvement on the British model, and which had combined such various talents in its first concoction, having been formed by the pope and a cardinal, and put into execution by a Presbyterian governor and an Episcopal secretary. Yet by the late proclamation of Sir Gilbert Elliot, it appeared that no one part of the French Republic was in more confusion than our valuable kingdom of Corsica. If therefore all our hopes of peace were to depend on the success of the new constitution, he confessed that he saw no prospect of a speedy termination to our calamities. The scarcity of corn every man must deeply lament, because every man must feel for the pinching distresses of the poor, but he greatly feared the evil could not be remedied by legislative means, and it was mischievous and dangerous to hold out any remedy for an evil without the certainty of its effect. It was only in his mind by a peace, that a speedy and sure remedy would be found for it. The imbecility of administration, he asserted, had been manifested in every department; it was therefore incumbent on their Lordships to enquire into the mismanagement of our

affairs. Even the conduct of the navy, with our boasted superiority, was not exempt from this uniform incapacity, a fact established past contradiction, by the mortifying event of our trade having suffered in two of our most opulent convoys. If we could by any means prevail on the people of France to accept of our ministers as their new directors, he should have some confidence in one further struggle, but those ministers were actuated by such heterogeneous passions that it was impossible to expect from them attention to the conduct of our national affairs. Some of them came into power, avowedly to watch the friends of Brissot in that House, and of course they had not time for other duties. He believed if an appeal were made to their own hearts, they could not one of them conscientiously declare that he had discharged his duty to his country.

Earl Spencer said he was not able to argue in such an extensive manner as the Noble Lord, nor was he disposed, like him, to assert that whatever he advanced would neither make any impression on the House nor serve to convince any Noble Lord of opposite sentiments. He considered that he came there to discharge his duty conscientiously and honestly, and he considered also that, according to his station in his Majesty's councils, he was bound to acknowledge responsibility. So far as he was responsible therefore, he would acknowledge that he had a share in advising the Speech delivered from the throne, and he could safely say, that he did so to the best of his ability and judgment. Other men might possess better talents and more wisdom, but he defied any to act from purer motives.

The Noble Earl had expressed an extraordinary degree of surprize at the satisfaction with which the speech commenced, resulting from our improved situation. For his own part he did not deny that many unfavourable circumstances had happened in the course of the last campaign; yet, notwithstanding, he thought upon the whole our situation was not so bad as was by some industriously represented, or as it might have been expected to have been by others. He did not confine this opinion to military operations, but he formed it from a general review of the transactions. Look to the beginning of the year and we shall be surprised. He had always been an advocate for a vigorous prosecution of the war; and if there was now a nearer and better prospect of attaining the chief object of it, a permanent and honourable peace, he should be blameable at such an important crisis to relax from his former opinion and professions. Whatever is the prospect,

prospect, it is the duty of administration to persevere in the maintenance of the character and dignity of the country, which would be sacrificed by the conditions suggested by the Noble Duke. What did the Noble Duke propose?—That no other indemnity should be stipulated for than the tranquillity of the nation, or in other words, peace. Ministers, on the contrary, have always thought it their duty to require an indemnity for the expences of the war, and the people would consequently expect it from them. How then continue to insist upon inlemnification, when, if the Noble Duke's amendment should be adopted, they must accept peace singly and separately from all other considerations, for the House would have declared they wished for no other?

His Lordship observed, that the noble Earl, among other arguments, had insinuated that the present prospects of peace were probably delusions to tantalize the public. He begged the noble Lord to recollect that the safety and happiness of the country, as well as their situations, were much too important to risk, by ministers trifling with the public at such a crisis. Whenever any other person should be appointed to succeed him, he should very readily give way to their superior ability, though conscious, at the same time, that they could not discharge their duty with superior zeal and integrity. He had continued, and should continue, to use his best endeavours for the happiness and prosperity of the nation, and if he did not do so, he should be liable to the censure of their Lordships, and therefore would take no credit to himself on that account. With regard to the loss of a part of our convoys, the misfortune had happened to us, but in the course of a war like the present, if it should happen that traders are intercepted, no man could wonder at it, indeed it would be wonderful, if they were not.

If the noble Earl would reflect on the vast numbers of ships coming in from, and going out to every quarter of the world, ships both large and small, and frequently sailing at risk, or dispersed by gales of wind, he would rather be surprised that so few had been captured, especially as almost the whole of the maritime commerce is in our own hands, while the enemy scarcely holds any. The late melancholy losses in the Mediterranean and Jamaica homeward-bound fleets, were not difficult to account for. The Jamaica fleet had been separated from its convoy on the 13th of September, and the fleet came home safe, except a small squadron. The Mediterranean fleet having sailed, was detained by contrary winds so long, that although it left Gibraltar on the 24th of September, it was but a little to the westward of St. Vincents on

the 7th of October, during which time a Squadron had sailed from Toulon, passed through the Straits of Gibraltar, and captured a part of it, some of which have been re-taken. Our fleet in the Mediterranean was in much greater force than that at Toulon, and a Squadron had been detached from St. Fiorenzo, by Admiral Hotham, on the 27th of September, in pursuit. The noble Earl might talk of blocking up the ports of the enemy, so as to suffer no Squadron to escape; but he appealed to every professional man, whether it was possible at all times to prevent the sailing of small Squadrons, and whether the sailing of the Toulon fleet was attributable to any negligence on the part of the Admiral? No measure could be taken after quitting the Straits. Some noble Lords had said, that the loss of these traders, were owing to the expedition on the Coast of France; but he assured them, that if the ships employed in that expedition, had not been sent there, they would have been dispersed and sent elsewhere, for they could not have been engaged upon the Mediterranean station.

The noble Earl he remarked, had laid a great stress on the selection of Monsieur de Puissaye for that expedition. For his part, Earl Spencer said, he had seen him but once, and could not therefore presume to speak much of his personal qualifications; but he requested the noble Earl to recollect that Monsieur de Puissaye had been at the head of a considerable party in France, whose object was the restoration of monarchy, from whom he expected great assistance. That being chief of that party, all communication with it from this country was through him. Without him, consequently there was a much less prospect of a junction with his party, and the number of those, who joined to fight in the cause, for which the expedition was undertaken, would have been less. This has been justified in the event. Out of doors he was aware their Lordships were in the habit of hearing false reports, and therefore he would take this opportunity of setting them right. Monsieur de Puissaye was at this very moment at the head of a considerable party, that is to say, a party very great in its extent, which was ready to join, and did join, and was now acting with great effect. It was true, that many unfortunate persons had perished in that expedition, but it was a melancholy event which could not be avoided in war, and was attributable to another unfortunate cause.

Another part of the noble Earl's speech, which he noticed, was, he said, too serious and delicate for publick discussion, if it had not been the duty of his Majesty's servants to bring it forward

forward. He agreed completely with the noble Earl, who had observed it was both dangerous and mischievous to hold out any remedy for an evil without the certainty of its effect. He left the noble Lords to judge of the prudence and expedience of a positive and unqualified assertion, that acceding to the motion of the noble Duke, was the only way to reduce the price of corn. Such a declaration certainly had a mischievous tendency, though he would not apply it to any person that such a tendency was designed. The consumption of provision was, without doubt, increased by war; but whenever he heard that that consumption was provoked by the present war, he would give it his flat denial. When noble Lord's talked of so much being sent abroad for the sustenance of our troops, he begged leave to remind them that our troops must be fed if they were at home. If there be a scarcity, they ought to be careful how far they raise expectations which they are not able to verify. If there be a deficiency, he granted that expedients to remedy that deficiency should be admitted. He allowed the truth of the old proverb, that "war produces scarcity," but that proverb, he said, regards the theatre of the war, where devastation and distress must inevitably happen. The difference here, was material indeed, and one which arose from the country's being so happily insulated.

In regard to the noble Duke's observations on the country curate, he observed, that if a secure and permanent peace could be obtained, the distresses would diminish, but even then, with so large a national debt, we must have taxes, and he did not think a tax on wine should be much complained of. As to ale, no tax on malt had lately been imposed.

Before he sat down, he begged leave to declare, that he had espoused the war in opposition to the system of propagating such pernicious doctrines and opinions as it commenced with; and he was happy to find, that, in consequence of the opposition made to them by the people of this country in general, they were almost destroyed. As much had been done, more might be; and, for his part, he had rather support a perpetual and eternal war, than not obtain a secure and permanent peace.

Lord Lauderdale rose, not, he said, to speak again to the question, but to explain the motives of his conduct. The noble Earl might attribute insinuations to him of a dangerous tendency; but he was extremely disorderly in using such a mode of argument; he disclaimed all such ideas, and assured the Lordships, that whatever he might have said, was caused by

his desire to speak the truth and not to inflame mens minds, nor deceive them with imaginary blessings.

The *Marquis of Lansdown* rose also to speak in explanation, and in order to remove every suspicion that he had endeavoured to insinuate any thing improper, reminded the House what his conduct had uniformly been ever since the scarcity was felt. At the place where he resided last summer, the poor were excessively distressed, some of whom had nothing but bread and water to live upon, as he learned from the clergyman, who was a magistrate also. Yet he had forborne to mention this circumstance, knowing how powerful and plausible a weapon it would be in the possession of heated men. He was too sensible also that government would prevent it if they could, and at least get every possible information on the subject. When he told their Lordships that the high price of provisions would be reduced, by the decision of that night, he did not mean absolutely and literally by the acceptance of the motion of amendment, but by the immediate influence it would have in procuring peace. Incredible he said, had been the waste and dearth of provisions in consequence of the war; the causes were manifest. The diversion of so many men from agriculture to naval and military occupations, the extravagant consumption beyond that which is consumed in their ordinary capacity, the losses by capture, the prodigious waste, the other disasters incident to warfare, and the exportation of grain to the West Indies, which used to be supplied from America. These were the causes, and so convinced was he of their effects, that he had before suggested, with as much caution as he could, the suggestion that had been made to him of raising the price of wages by Act of Parliament. He wished not to inflame the people but to avoid the appearance of deception, and although he gave the noble Earl credit for acting conscientiously, he hoped the noble Earl and the rest of his Majesty's ministers, would allow other men to have a little conscience as well as themselves. He was resolved, however, to assert the Right of Parliament, else any minister might controul the freedom of debate by objecting to what he might be pleased to construe insinuations of a dangerous tendency, and thrown out for inflammatory purposes.

Earl Spencer had said, and would say again, that the mode which the noble Duke had proposed, was not the mode to obtain an honourable and permanent peace, but he conceived the speech delivered from the Throne, contained the good and proper mode, and therefore supported the original, as safer and more secure.

The *Marquis of Townshend* was sorry that the discussion of the high price of corn had gone to such a length, but with permission he would send to the noble Lord a receipt, whereby a family might live one third cheaper than by the common use of bread. He used this mode himself, and it was extremely wholesome and nutritious, and if the noble Lord would supply the poor in his neighbourhood with it, they would be able to bear the distresses of the war much easier.

Lord Hawkebury declared he had not intended to take any part in the debate, but he could not help agreeing with the noble Earl, and throwing out a few ideas upon the present scarcity. The scarcity was in one sense owing to the war, but it was with this distinction. France has been at war with almost every other country, and in a state of civil war throughout the greater part of her provinces; consequently she has not been able to produce much grain. Her armies have been marching also in other countries, and have consumed or are consuming their great granaries, and hence she has not enough at home for her own internal consumption, while her armies abroad lay waste the means of supply. Let noble Lords turn their eyes homeward, and look to the advantages derived by this country from her distressful situation. Is there another free and open country to which the harvests of foreign shores can be imported? Suppose the ports of France were to be opened, she would not only diminish the resources we apply to, but draw off part of our own supplies, for at present no corn is permitted to be exported. He acknowledged that he had not made himself a perfect master of the subject, but these were a few leading opinions which he had formed upon it.

The *Lord Chancellor* took notice of the digression from the subject, that had marked the debate, and admitted with the noble Earl who had lately spoken in explanation, (*Lord Lauderdale*) that no member of the House was at liberty to ascribe motives to another for the sort of reasoning he had advanced; every man's motives were lodged in his own bosom, and it was highly irregular to do more than to answer his argument, and to meet it on the ground, be it what it might, that the noble Lord might be pleased to rest it upon. For his own part, he would quarrel with no man for his opinions, provided they were delivered with a due regard to that decorum suitable to the dignity of the House, and professedly turned out with an honest desire of contributing to the publick good. He would not at that late hour intrude upon their Lordships with any long discussion on the leading topics.

topicks, which necessarily were alluded to in the Speech from the Throne; they had been sufficiently spoken to already, but he rose rather to say a few words to a very important part of the subject in debate, viz. the high price of corn, its scarcity, and the consequent distress of the poor for bread. The theme was undoubtedly extremely important and extremely delicate, but as it made an ingredient in the Speech from the Throne, every noble Lord was not only at liberty, but in a manner called upon to state his sentiments, as to the best means of applying a remedy to an evil; which every one of their Lordships must deeply lament. He could not but be sorry that the noble Marquis, whose great weight in the country, gave considerable authority to every thing he said, had mentioned the raising the wages of the labouring men to the average price of a bushel of wheat per week, as a means of relief which met with his sanction.

The *Marquis of Lansdown* rose again, in order to set the noble and learned Lord right. He had expressly declared, that he had not yet made up his mind upon that plan, or any other, but that it was one among others that had been mentioned to him in the country, and it appeared to be more feasible than most that he had heard of, but he was far from meaning to commit himself to the recommending its adoption.

The *Lord Chancellor* resumed his argument, and restated the point subject to the Marquis's correction. He next proceeded to notice what had fallen from the Duke of Grafton respecting the hard situation of a country curate, who could not according to his Grace's statement afford himself a glass of wine, or a pint of ale a day, without being at the expence of three pounds *per annum*. The new duty on wine had certainly been a duty created by the war, and it was one of the burthens which curates, if they chose to drink wine, must share in bearing, as well as the rest of his Majesty's subjects, but it was to be recollected that wine was a luxury, and the tax on it a most laudable tax, when taxes were indispensable, on account of its produce and efficiency. With regard to the pint of ale, the argument was not applicable to the war, as no new tax or excise had been imposed on malt or beer, since the war commenced. If it were a grievance, therefore, it was not a grievance caused by the war. With regard to the noble Duke's expression, that the laws of the country were obliged to be executed by the military.—

The Duke begged leave to interrupt the noble and learned Lord, as he had obviously misapprehended him. His Grace then repeated what he had said, by which it appeared, that he

he had meant to charge it generally that the laws were so executed, but that too frequently it happened.

The *Duke of Grafton* happening to stand extremely near the Lord Chancellor, while the noble and learned Lord was on his legs, his Grace gave his explanation in so governed a tone, that his voice did not reach the end of the House below the table, the Bishop of Rochester seeing two peers on their legs at the same time, and not distinctly hearing what the Duke was saying, called to order.

The Duke apparently hurt at being called to order, immediately said, with an audible voice, If the Right Reverend Prelate, who thought himself entitled to give laws to the House, chose to discuss a question of order with him, he was ready to discuss it, or any other question, that the Right Reverend Prelate thought proper to bring forward. That he had been perfectly in order. A noble and learned Lord having misunderstood him, had proceeded to mistake his argument; upon which he had risen to explain what he had said, which was perfectly regular, in order, and consonant to parliamentary usage.

The *Bishop* said it was undeniably disorderly for two noble Lords to be upon their legs at the same time holding a conversation together, which the rest of the House could not hear.

The *Lord Chancellor* once more resumed his argument; the noble Duke, he said, certainly had not been disorderly, but happening to stand near him, when he found occasion to interrupt him, in order to explain, by restating what he had said, he had not thought it necessary to raise his voice so much as his Grace doubtless would have done, if he had stood farther from him. But to return to the matter to which he was drawing their Lordships attention when the interruption took place; he wished to set the noble Duke right, by declaring that there was at present no wish in government to call in the aid of the military to quell civil commotion, where the civil power had authority enough to preserve the peace and put an end to outrage and disorder. With regard to the anecdote, which the noble Duke had stated, he certainly had been mistaken in supposing that Chief Justice Holt had been the magistrate who had quitted the bench to suppress the riot, when the meeting-houses were pulled down. In the first place it was impossible, because Mr. Justice Holt had been in his grave some years. 2dly, Because the riot occasioned by the mobs proceeding to pull down the meeting-houses was not quelled without the interference of the military; and lastly, because several of the rioters were tried and convicted.

convicted for their conduct on that occasion. Having settled this error, his Lordship said, he was very far from meaning to impute a similarity of sentiment, or a desire to coincide either in language or opinion between the noble Marquis, the noble Duke, and certain persons without doors, but he had read in a newspaper, called the Telegraph, an account of the proceedings of a meeting held in the fields on the first day, where many inflammatory harangues were addressed to the passions of the lower order of the people, and seditious papers and hand-bills circulated, which had obviously produced that degree of impression in ignorant and uninformed minds, to which the indecent and scandalous outrages in Westminster, the preceding day, were to be attributed. In that account, in the Telegraph, it was not a little singular, that the three matters stated by the noble Duke, and the noble Marquis, in the course of the debate, had been brought forward, discussed, and much insisted upon; he repeated it, that he was sure the noble Duke and noble Marquis did not mean to lend the weight of their rank and character to sanction the arguments of such a meeting, it was therefore, in his judgement, much to be lamented, that it should have happened, that the doctrines of the political demagogues, to whom he alluded, should have received, even accidentally, the countenance of so august and dignified an assembly as the House, and that the same sort of reasoning should have prevailed at a meeting made up of such characters and their Lordships. The bad consequences of such meetings as that held lately in the fields near Islington, were so obvious, that his Lordship said, it would be unnecessary for him to dwell upon them, it was enough to mention the absurdity of men haranguing about the decay of the national wealth in a situation in which they could not turn their heads round without seeing a rising village on every side of them, and dealing out phillippics on the subject of the general distress of the kingdom, under the very smoke of the brick kilns that were burning in order to furnish materials for the erection of new villages, when the season fit for building should return, and their Lordships well knew that the strongest proof of an increasing population and the increasing wealth of a nation, that could be possibly given, was the rapid addition of new habitations and extending vicinage. Having strongly expressed his wishes, that nothing should have fallen out in the course of the debate, that could for a moment incline people without doors to imagine that any of their Lordships felt, in unison with those from whom they certainly would not be much gratified

sed in having it thought that they borrowed their opinions, the Lord Chancellor took notice of what had been said by a noble Earl (Lord Lauderdale) in respect to the conscientiousness of the present ministers, and the views with which they came into office. He said that it was most true, that one of the circumstances which inclined him to accept of the situation which he had the honour to fill, was to profit by the opportunity it afforded him of opposing and resisting a system, which had produced such bitter fruit in a neighbouring kingdom, and threatened to take root in this country. His Lordship said, he had the satisfaction, for he must use the word, notwithstanding the displeasure it had been received with by several of their Lordships, to know that he was speaking at that moment in a British House of Lords, an assembly which their Lordships would recollect it had, by a certain description of persons, been long since asserted would not at that time be in existence. If the principles that the French had made it their boast that they would study to propagate throughout Europe, had not been early, earnestly, and effectually resisted, the privileges of every one of their Lordships might ere this have been at an end, and Great Britain might have been made a scene of the same anarchy, the same distress, and the same desolation and ruin that France had for some time presented. He drew a striking picture of the contrast to be seen between the internal situation of that country and of this, as well as of their resources, their commerce, their agriculture, and their manufactures. Our ports were daily sending out merchantmen fraught with valuable cargoes of the produce and creation of the soil, or the industry of our husbandmen and manufacturers, or receiving ships richly laden with cargoes of raw materials to be worked up by our artizans, or commodities and merchandize to create fresh employment for the ingenious, the factor, and the merchant. In France every trade but those of war and ambition were at a stand, and every species of industry was no more. The history of their manufactures and commerce, which had been one great means of their national celebrity, was to be traced only in the ruins of Marseilles, of Lyons, and such other great towns, as had formerly excited the admiration of the world from the magnificence of the buildings, the ingenuity of the workmen, the perfection of their manufactures, and the extent of their traffick in those manufactures at home and abroad. The fatal effects of building up government upon now and wild, and idle theories had, by the example of the French, been sufficiently

ciently shewn, and he hoped it would serve as an useful lesson to this country and to posterity. In France we had seen what was termed the system of terror prevail in all its horrors. Faction had succeeded faction, and men, the most violent enemies to each other, by the convulsion of parties had on the sudden found themselves destined to death together, and met upon the same scaffold to expiate their perhaps equal, but differently directed, crimes. Thus tyranny succeeded tyranny, and one despot and his partizans hastily followed another to their fate. These were the blessed effects of systems of government founded in what was called equality and the rights of man. He hoped the good sense of the people of this country would teach them to profit by the exhibition of such scenes; that they would see that due subordination, and a government by law, was the best security for preserving a constitution under which they had long experienced, and he hoped they would long continue to experience blessings and benefits of inestimable value. Having pursued this well timed appeal to the feelings of every auditor for some time, his Lordship drew his animated and able speech to a conclusion by declaring that he should give his vote for the Address, since the noble Duke's amendment seemed to him to be highly objectionable as well on account of the difficulty and embarrassment it would create in the way of negotiation, for what it professed to be its sole subject, the acceleration of peace, as because it proposed to seek no other indemnity than what might result from the return of two things, both of which were in our possession at the present moment, viz. wealth and industry.

The *Duke of Norfolk* rose next, and made a short speech in support of the motion of the noble Duke, for which he declared he should vote, because it was distinctly said in it, that if the French would not agree to fair terms of peace, they would support the crown in carrying on the war. He owned the declaration of ministers, that day, did not make the amendment so necessary as it would otherwise have been. He reminded the learned Lord, that the French revolution had originated not with the people, but with the government, in consequence of their distress from extravagance and waste, which had brought on the ruin of their resources—a thing which ought to be a warning to all governments.

The *Duke of Bedford* said, that after the indulgence he had received, he would not make use of the customary privilege allowed to the mover of an amendment, and animadvert on the various topics of the debate; the declaration of his Majesty was not sufficiently precise; but that of the Secretary of State that
 night,

night, if he had taken down his words correctly, would satisfy him, and he should, with the consent of their Lordships, withdraw his amendment if he understood that the noble Lord agreed to them. The noble Secretary of State's words, which he had not taken down at the moment, but almost immediately afterwards, were—"That in case the constitution now offered to the people of France, and perhaps now adopted, should be found likely to establish itself in such a form as should secure a government likely to preserve the relations of peace and amity, his objections to treating with them would be entirely removed." He asked if these, or similar words, were correct.

Lord Grenville said, he never would hold ambiguous language or deny what he had said in that House, he would therefore repeat his assertion, (which his Lordship did deliberately, and which imported the hope that the government of France, under the new constitution, would assume a form that would encourage his Majesty's ministers to consider it as a government capable of preserving the accustomed relations of amity and peace, and that as soon as it did so, they would deem it a proper time for negotiation, and would accordingly, being as anxious for obtaining an honourable peace as any set of men, whenever it could be obtained on such terms as Great Britain had a right to expect, and which should promise to render it safe and permanent) but to attempt to make the words of an individual peer in the debate, not taken down at the time, a ground of either the making or the withdrawing any motion, was so unfair and so unparliamentary, that he would not consent to be placed in such a situation. His Lordship enforced this idea very steadily and firmly.

• The *Duke of Bedford* said, he meant nothing unfair or unparliamentary, that not wishing to clog ministers, he was willing to withdraw his motion if he could see any cause, plain and intelligible, assumed by ministers, and that fairly avowed, though it did not go so far as he wished it. He moved then to withdraw his amendment, declaring, at the same time, that he could not agree to that part of the address which expressed their satisfaction at the improved state of affairs.

The amendment was, by consent of the House, withdrawn; and the motion for the Address carried. The Address then went through the usual forms, and was ordered to be presented to his Majesty by the whole House; as was the Address on the circumstance of the attack on his royal person.

Earl

Earl Spencer gave notice, that on the first day of the meeting of the House, he should move for the thanks of the House to Lord Bithort, and the officers under him for the gallant action against the French on the 23d of June last.
Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

FRIDAY, *October 30.*

Two new writs were ordered, one for the Borough of Rye, in the county of Sussex, in the room of General Clarke, who has accepted one of the Chiltern Hundreds, and the other for the county of Haddington, in Scotland, in the room of John Hamilton, Esq. who has accepted the office of Receiver General.

The Earl of Dalkith brought up the Address, which was read a first and second time, after which it was agreed that it should be presented by the whole House, and such members as are of his Majesty's Honourable Privy Council, were desired to wait upon his Majesty, to know when it will be his pleasure to receive the same.

Lord Mornington reported, that he had been to the Lords with the message of that House, and that their Lordships had informed him they would send an answer by messengers of their own.

Mr. Jekyll said, Parliament had never been assembled at a time more big with important expectations than the present, but from the experience he had of the Right Honourable Gentleman opposite to him, he did not consider it assembled so much with a view to the discussion of our affairs, as for supporting his administration, and obtaining fresh supplies. He supposed the Right Honourable Gentleman had felt himself totally exhausted of his finances, and had recourse to this assembly to enable him to carry on the war. Upon that subject he had one question to put, which he hoped would be answered. He desired to know "whether the Right Honourable Gentleman was disposed to avow, that he had adopted that ruinous and extravagant system, which originated in the worst of times, and under the worst of governments in France?" That is to say, "whether he had not been drawing fresh loans upon bills, without the concurrence and indemnity of Parliament, thereby involving the honour and credit of the nation, as well as aggravating the national debt by an exorbitant discount?" *Mr. Jekyll* had

had understood that it had lately been the practice to negotiate bills, dated Hamburgh, and drawn upon a banker in London of the name of Boyd, which were made payable in four months, and in consequence discounted at the Bank. So numerous and so large had been the sums of money given to Comte Artois, and so lavishly squandered in the expedition to Quiberon, and on the coast of France, that this expedient was absolutely necessary to sustain the sinking credit until the supplies should be granted, which, if the report be true, ought in such a case to be refused, for it was dishonourable to the nation, and encroaching on the privileges of Parliament, while it resembled the last pitiful means of a bankrupt trader.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that whenever the Honourable and learned Gentleman would be pleased to name a regular day for the discussion of this business, he should not be unwilling to answer any question concerning it, but in the mean time, he assured him, that no step had been taken to exceed the amount granted by Parliament last session.

SCARCITY OF CORN.

The House then resolved itself into a committee to take into consideration the present scarcity and high price of corn. Mr. Ryder in the chair.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that his only object for having moved that the House resolve itself into a committee then, was to take the earliest opportunity of relieving the public mind, by asking leave to bring in a Bill for the further continuance of a Bill passed last session, allowing the importation of corn into this kingdom from any foreign country, duty free. The Bill that had passed last session did not expire for some weeks, and it was his intention that the limited time should be extended to twelve months longer. He wished, therefore, that a select committee might be appointed next Tuesday, when all the information which government had received upon this subject should be laid before it, and further enquiry might be made in consequence to obtain a necessary remedy.

Mr. *Hussey* desired to ask one question.—He wished to know whether the plan of re-issu was likely to be effectual? He supposed the Right Honourable Gentleman had considered it well, and that there was a probability that the product of foreign countries had been sufficient not only for their own consumption, but to allow the surplus to us; but if from the information of foreign countries it should be found, that they are not able to send a supply to our markets so as to gain a competent

competent profit, we had no reason to expect an importation without a bounty.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he was by no means immoveably attached or wedded to the plans he had suggested, which were merely simple and experimental, but he hoped when the subject came to be discussed in the committee, he might hear of some probable method, in which case he should be ready to forego his own plan to adopt it. At present he had only called the attention of the House to the pressure of the scarcity, and conceived that any idea of a bounty would be impolitic and imprudent. It was impossible to be too cautious in an affair of such importance.

General Smith declared he could not entertain much confidence in ministers, who had lately considered the then approaching harvest as adequate to remedy the scarcity. However, he hoped that a sufficient store of foreign grain would be laid up to prevent a similar distress in future.

M^r. Fox rose, not to make any objection to the motion for bringing in this Bill, but to receive information when the law for prohibiting the distilleries expires, as their use would materially affect the price of grain.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* informed him that the act expired in February next.

M^r. Hussey said, he meant to have made the same remark. He hoped they were to be stopped, and if they were, why not publish it? The price of grain fell before when the distilleries were stopped, and the knowledge of this circumstance might have effect.

The committee having made the motion,

Mr. Dudley Ryder brought up the report, and next Tuesday was named for the appointment of a select committee.

A message from the Lords, informed the House, that their Lordships had sent a copy of the minutes of the evidence, whose names had been yesterday delivered.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* moved the order of the day, for taking into consideration the address communicated by the Lords. (Vide this work, page 5.)

The minutes of the evidence were then read. The first was that of *Mr. J. Walford*, haberdasher, of Pall-mall, who was on duty as constable, and stationed at the Horse Guards. He attended on the right hand side of the gate-way, and *Mr. Stockdale* on the left, to whom he pointed out one person in the crowd, assembled about the gate-way, as very active in his exclamations of "Down with George!"—"No War!" He afterwards attended his Majesty to the House of Peers, and

in the narrow passage opposite the Ordnance Office saw something pass with great velocity, and soon after found the glass of his Majesty's coach broke. To him it appeared to be a ball which had passed him and broken the glass. He soon discovered the same man again, who was at that time quiet, but on his Majesty's return he saw him stoop down, as if to pick up something, while stones were thrown about by the mob. He afterwards heard him cry "Down with George!" again, and sprang forward to seize him, but was obliged to desist, or be trampled on by the Horse Guards. He at length seized him in the court-yard of St. James's. The substance which was thrown the witness supposed to be the size of a marble or bullet, from the hole it made in the glass. He saw it pass through the air, but on account of its velocity, could not distinguish what it was. The man had nothing in his hands when he stooped down, and many stones were thrown by other people. Many persons also repeated the same words, among whom was a barber. He did not perceive any French accent in their exclamations. The man, when apprehended, struggled to get away, and cried, "Good God! am I suspected of disloyalty? Surely there can be no harm in acquainting the King with our grievances?" He was searched, but there was no instrument, nor missile weapon found upon him.

Mr. John Stockdale, bookseller, of Piccadilly, was stationed that day as a constable near the Horse-Guards. He observed many people hissing, and there was a number of others hissing also, whom he did not notice. In the narrow part, between the palace-yards, a stone was flung, and Mr. Walford pointed a person out to Kennedy, of Bow-street, whom he suspected to have flung it, but the crowd was so thick as to render it uncertain. There was a frequent cry of "No war, no King!" About the middle of the park, the man was seen again, and he set Walford at defiance. He was a young man, in a green coat, with a black collar, and a guard or two were at that time before him. The substance which Mr. Stockdale saw thrown, looked like a halfpenny, but its force was spent, and therefore he believed the glass to be broken with something else. Two substances were thrown, and fifty of the same gang, if he might be allowed to use the expression, were among the crowd. The young man rested on the shoulder of another person, but, after his apprehension, denied all knowledge of that person.

Mr. Walford, on a re-examination said, that he thought the stone had been thrown by the man he apprehended, though he

observed a window open at the time. He suspected the substance to be a stone, because it was rounder and harder than a halfpenny.

Mr. James Parker, of Pimlico, and one of his Majesty's footmen, was on the right hand side of the state coach, when something whizzed by him, which, as it was attended with no report, he imagined to be discharged from an air gun. It made a little hole in the glass of the state coach, and a window opposite was open. He was so timid and alarmed at the time that he recollected nothing else.

John Sayer, an officer of Bow-street, was against the glass of the coach-door, when he heard a crash, and a round hole was broken in the middle, about the size of his finger, with a star round it. He knew the place, and the house opposite to which it was thrown—He did not know where the persons assembled, for there were different men in different places. Thirty or forty however followed the coach, hissing and hallooing for "Peace!" On being questioned again as to the number which followed, he said there were thirty or forty on each side of the coach, so that there might be eighty in all, or if he said a hundred, he should not exaggerate. Among other persons who hissed was the man seized in the park.

Christopher Kennedy, an officer of Bow-street, saw the hole in the glass starred, but did not think it had been broken with a stone; for, if it had, he imagined the hole would have been larger. He did not observe the open window, but he saw a number of people, some of whom were huzzaing and others hissing. He saw one stone thrown, too: it was as big as a walnut.

Here the minutes of the evidence closed; when the address was read a second time. The House then agreed with the address *unanimè contradicente*, and the blanks were ordered to be filled up.

A message was sent to acquaint the Lords, that the Commons agreed with their address; and the House adjourned till the next day.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

SATURDAY, October 31.

The House met at half past one, and proceeded to St. James's with their Address.—Adjourned to Wednesday next.

The

The following is a copy of the Address of the House of Lords, presented to the King at St. James's, on Saturday the 31st of October, in answer to his Majesty's most gracious Speech from the Throne, and his Majesty's Answer.

*The Humble ADDRESS of the Right Honourable the LORDS
Spiritual and Temporal, in Parliament assembled.*

Die Veneris, 30 Octobris 1795.

Most gracious Sovereign,

WE, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, in Parliament assembled, beg leave to return your Majesty our humble thanks for your Majesty's most gracious Speech from the Throne.

We beg leave to assure your Majesty, that we see with great pleasure, that, notwithstanding many events unfavourable to the common cause, a material improvement in the general prospect of affairs appears to have taken place in the course of the present year; and particularly, that the threatened invasion of Italy has been prevented, and that the offensive projects, which the French were pursuing on the side of Germany, have been frustrated by the recent operations of the Austrian army. We are sensible that the advantages which our enemies have derived from the successes which have attended their military operations in other parts of the campaign, and from the conclusion of separate treaties of peace, are far from compensating the evils they experience from the continuance of the war; and it is particularly satisfactory to us to observe, with your Majesty, the impression which has been produced by the destruction of their commerce, the diminution of their naval strength, and the distress of their internal situation, as well as the general sense which appears to prevail in France, of the necessity of peace and settled government, in order to relieve the increasing pressure of these

While we feel the uncertainty of the issue of the crisis to which the distraction and anarchy of France have now led, we are fully sensible of the important consequences which it must probably produce. If this crisis should terminate in any order of things compatible with the tranquillity of other countries, and affording a reasonable expectation of security and permanence in any treaty which might be concluded, we should see with pleasure a disposition in the enemy to treat for general peace, on just and suitable terms; and in the gracious declaration of your Majesty's views in that respect, we recognize the same paternal attention to the welfare of your Majesty's subjects, which we have had so many occasions to see with gratitude: But we should very ill discharge our duty to your Majesty and to

our country, if we did not readily concur in every measure which may be necessary to convince our enemies that we are prepared for either alternative, and are determined to support your Majesty in the vigorous prosecution of the war, till your Majesty shall be enabled to conclude, in conjunction with your Allies, such a peace as the justice of our cause and the situation of the enemy may entitle your Majesty to expect : And we are sensible how important it is, for these objects, to maintain and improve our naval superiority, and to secure and extend the advantages obtained in the West Indies, so nearly connected with our commercial resources and maritime strength.

Permit us to assure your Majesty, that, while we regret the necessity under which your Majesty has found yourself of treating the United Provinces as in a state of war, we learn with much satisfaction the cordial and active assistance afforded by the naval force furnished to your Majesty by the Empress of Russia.

We return your Majesty our grateful thanks for the communication, which your Majesty has been pleased to direct to be made to us, of the defensive engagements concluded by your Majesty with the Two Imperial Courts, and of the treaty with the United States of America.

We beg leave to assure your Majesty, that we are deeply sensible of the paternal sentiments expressed by your Majesty respecting the difficulties arising to your Majesty's subjects from the high price of grain : We have the highest pleasure in reflecting on the gracious manner in which your Majesty is pleased to express your sense of the spirit of order and submission to the laws, which, with very few exceptions, has continued to manifest itself under this severe pressure : And we intreat your Majesty to be persuaded, that we shall not fail to apply ourselves, with the utmost diligence, to the consideration of such measures as may tend to alleviate the present distress, and to prevent the renewal of it in future. Relying with the utmost confidence on the concurrence of your Majesty in such remedies as may be found practicable, in a concern so important to the welfare of your Majesty's subjects, which we know from long experience to be always the object nearest to your Majesty's heart.

His MAJESTY's most Gracious Answer.

MY LORDS,

I receive with the greatest pleasure this very loyal and dutiful Address.

The sense which you entertain of the present situation and prospect of affairs, and the assurances you give me of your support in that line of conduct which I have judged it necessary to pursue, must produce the best effects with a view to either of the alternatives to which the present crisis may lead.

My exertions shall be unremittingly employed to maintain the honour and essential interest of my kingdoms, and promote the welfare and prosperity of my people.

HOUSE

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

SATURDAY, *October 31.*

The *Speaker* took the chair at half past one o'clock.

The order of the day being read for taking his Majesty's Speech into consideration,

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* moved, "That a supply be granted to his Majesty," which being agreed to, he moved. "That the motion be referred to a Committee of the whole House on Monday next."—Ordered.

Mr. Dundas gave notice that he would, on Monday, move for the thanks of that House to Admiral Lord Bridport and the other officers for the naval victory of the 23d of June last.

A message was received from the Lords, "That they would wait on his Majesty with their address at two o'clock."

Lord Stoford acquainted the House with his Majesty's pleasure, that he would receive their address at half past two o'clock. At two o'clock the House adjourned, and proceeded to St. James's with the address.

The Speaker was attended to St. James's by near 100 members.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

MONDAY, *November 2.*

The *Speaker* reported to the House that both Houses attended his Majesty upon Saturday last, with their Address; to which his Majesty was pleased to give this most gracious answer *.

The *Speaker* also reported to the House, that the House attended his Majesty upon Saturday last, with their address; to which his Majesty was pleased to give this most gracious answer †.

A new

* Vide Answer in Debates of the Lords, page 5.

† I thank you for this very loyal and dutiful address. It affords me the greatest satisfaction to learn that you concur in the view which I entertain of the general situation and prospect of affairs, and to receive the assurances of your firm and decided support in those exertions, which are most likely to ensure and accelerate the restoration of peace, on such grounds as the justice of our cause and the situation of the enemy may intitle us to expect.

Nothing

A new writ was ordered for the borough of St. Maw's, in Cornwall, in the room of Thomas Calvert, Esq; who has accepted the office of Steward to the Chiltern Hundreds.

The order of the day was read for the House to resolve itself into a committee for a supply of grants to his Majesty; and his Majesty's speech was referred to the consideration of the said committee.

The House accordingly resolved itself into a committee of the whole House—Mr. Hobart in the chair—when the question was put and carried, that a supply be granted; and Mr. Hobart was ordered to report the resolution, which will be received to-morrow.

Mr. *Secretary Dundas* observed, that, however gentlemen might differ upon political subjects in general concerning this war, there was but one opinion, he believed, upon the memorable examples of bravery, both naval and military, which our defenders had afforded. Among these memorable examples was the brilliant victory obtained over the enemy on the 23d of June last, by Lord Bridport and the officers and seamen under his command, in which they had displayed a zeal and military ardour that reflected honour on the annals of this country. He therefore moved, That the thanks of the House be given to Lord Bridport, K.B. and Rear Admiral of England, for his able and gallant conduct in the victory over the enemy's fleet on the 23d of June last*.

All

Nothing shall be omitted on my part, to make an effectual use of the means which you may put into my hands, for a purpose so important to the permanent interests and happiness of my people.

* That the Thanks of this House be given to Admiral Lord Bridport, for his able and gallant conduct in the important and brilliant victory obtained over the enemy on the 23d day of June last, by a detachment of his Majesty's fleet under his command.

That the thanks of this House be given to Vice Admiral Sir *Alan Gardner*, Baronet; Rear Admiral *Harvey*; and Rear Admiral Lord *Hugh Seymour*; for their gallant exertions on the above occasions; and that Mr. *Speaker* do signify the thanks of this House to Rear Admiral *Harvey*.

That the thanks of this House be given to the captains and officers of the Squadron under the command of Admiral Lord *Bridport*, for their gallant exertions on the above occasion, and that Admiral Lord *Bridport* do signify the same to them.

That this House do highly approve of and acknowledge the services of the seamen, marines, and soldiers on board the ships under the command of Admiral

All these motions were resolved *nemine contradicente*, and the House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

TUESDAY, November 3.

Mr. *Hobart* brought up the report of the committee of yesterday, which had voted that a supply be granted to his Majesty.—The resolution was read and agreed to.

Mr. *Speaker* acquainted the House, that he had received, from Vice Admiral *Hotham*, the following letter, in return to the thanks of that House, signed to him by Mr. *Speaker*, in obedience to the commands of the 10th day of *April*, in the last session of Parliament *.

HIGH.

ral Lord *Bridport*, in the brilliant action with the *French* fleet, on the 23d day of June last; and that the Captains of the several ships do signify the same to their respective crews, and do thank them for their gallant behaviour.

* SIR,

Britannia at Sea, 15th June, 1795.

The highly honourable and flattering testimony, conveyed in your letter, of the sense which the Commons of England have, by their unanimous vote, been pleased to entertain of my services, and that of the officers, seamen, and troops, serving under my orders on the 14th of March, I lost no time to communicate to them in the most public manner; for, to their efforts and exertions, it is to be attributed abundantly more merit than any of which I can boast.

Public thanks, coming from such an august assembly, as they reflect the highest lustre on those upon whom they are conferred, cannot but be considered as the greatest of all possible rewards, and must necessarily furnish additional incentives to that glory, zeal, and steady perseverance, which, I trust the British fleet will, at all times, manifest in the defence of their King and of their Country; and, as no language of mine can express the sense of what I feel for having, only in the execution of my duty, been so amply rewarded, I must beg you will do me the kindness, to endeavour to impress upon the Honourable House all that I feel from their indulgence, as I must ever consider it the first honour of my life to have obtained this public mark of their distinction.

I cannot conclude, without thanking you, Sir, most cordially for your obliging partiality, expressed in the polite and flattering terms with which you have been pleased to convey to me the resolutions of the House upon this occasion.

I have the honour to be,

SIR,

Your most obedient

Humble servant,

The Right Hon. the Speaker.

W. HOTHAM.

HIGH PRICE OF BREAD.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* moved the order of the day, for taking into farther consideration the high price of corn, which

Admiral Lord *Bridport* being come to the House, Mr. *Speaker* acquainted him, that the House had, yesterday, unanimously resolved, That the thanks of this House be given to him, for his able and gallant conduct in the important and brilliant victory obtained over the enemy, on the 23d day of *June* last, by a detachment of his Majesty's fleets under his command; and Mr. *Speaker* gave him the thanks of the House accordingly, as followeth, viz.

Admiral Lord *Bridport*,

IN obedience to the commands of this House, I have the happiness to communicate to your Lordship their unanimous thanks for the important service which you have rendered to your country. The intrepidity, the skill, and public spirit, of British officers and seamen, have at no period been more conspicuously and successfully manifested than during the present war. These qualities were peculiarly displayed on that memorable occasion, which have added lustre to the naval reputation of your country, as well as to your own. It is on that maritime superiority, which your Lordship has eminently contributed to maintain, that not the glory only, but the security and independence of these kingdoms, must, under the favour of divine Providence, materially and chiefly depend. This House has accordingly marked the deep sense which it entertains of your Lordship's conduct, by that honourable testimony of public gratitude which it is my duty to convey to you: In the name, therefore, of the Commons of Great Britain, I do give you their unanimous thanks for your able and gallant conduct in the important and brilliant victory obtained over the enemy on the 23d day of *June* last, by a detachment of his Majesty's fleet under your Lordship's command.

Upon which Admiral Lord *Bridport* said;

Mr. *Speaker*,

I Rise, Sir, with the warmest sentiments of gratitude, to express my unfeigned acknowledgements for the high honour the House of Commons have conferred upon me, by their unanimous vote of thanks, for my humble services on the 23d of *June* last. To the valour and spirited conduct of the Admirals, the bravery of the Captains, the other officers, seamen, marines, and soldiers, I attribute the success of a detachment of his Majesty's fleet, under my command on that day.

It was my duty, Sir, to manifest my loyalty to the best of sovereigns, to shew my veneration and attachment for our glorious constitution, and mark, to the utmost of my power, upon that and every other occasion, a sincere regard for the interests of the public; and I am now proud in receiving the vote of this House, which

which being read, and the House having resolved itself into a committee—

The

which you have had the goodness to convey, in terms the most gratifying to me ; for which honour, I beg, Sir, you will accept my cordial and grateful thanks.

Vice Admiral Sir *Alan Gardner*, Baronet, and Rear Admiral Lord *Hugh Seymour*, being come to the House, Mr. *Speaker* acquainted them, that the House had, yesterday, unanimously resolved, That the thanks of this House be given to them for their gallant exertions in the important and brilliant victory obtained over the enemy, on the 23d day of June last by a detachment of his Majesty's fleet under the command of Admiral Lord *Bridport*; and Mr. *Speaker* gave them the thanks of the House accordingly, as followeth, viz.

Vice Admiral Sir *Alan Gardner*, Rear Admiral Lord *Hugh Seymour*.

IT is with the utmost satisfaction that I obey the commands of this House, by conveying to you their unanimous thanks for your gallant exertions in the service of your country. An additional proof was given on the late distinguished occasion, of the superior skill and valour which are the characteristics of British officers and seamen, and which have raised to the eminence they have obtained, the naval power and glory of these kingdoms. In affording this proof you had severally a distinguished share; services so meritorious in themselves, and which lead to consequences so important, will ever insure the grateful acknowledgements of the Commons of Great Britain; and I do accordingly give you their unanimous thanks for your gallant exertions in the important and brilliant victory obtained over the enemy, on the 23d day of June last, by a detachment of his Majesty's fleet under the command of Admiral Lord *Bridport*.

Upon which Sir Alan Gardner said;

Mr. Speaker,

AFTER what has been said by the noble Lord, under whose command I had the honour to be placed (in the second post of his fleet) on the 23d day of June last, it would ill become me to say any thing farther respecting the transactions of that day. But, Sir, it is a duty incumbent on me to express to the House, in the strongest manner I am able the obligations I am under for the very favourable opinion which they have been pleased to entertain of my exertions and conduct on the day alluded to; and in the most respectful manner, to return my thanks to this august assembly, for the great and distinguished honour which they have this day conferred upon me.

Nothing, Sir, can be so gratifying to my feelings, as an officer, as to receive in my place, the thanks of this honourable House; an event so honourable to myself, will ever remain most deeply impressed on my mind.

Before I sit down, I must request, Sir, that you will accept my sincere thanks for the obliging manner in which you have been pleased to express the sentiments of the House on this occasion.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer proceeded to open the nature of the business. It was a subject, he said, of which he had given notice on Friday last. It was indeed needless for him to say it was a very important subject; what he had chiefly in view at the present moment was, to lay the foundation of a permanent enquiry into a matter of much pressing importance in itself, and at the same time of great consequence to our commerce and our agriculture on the one hand, and to a numerous class of people on the other. While they endeavoured to provide a remedy adequate to the evil in one sense, it was highly necessary for them to proceed with circumspection, diligence, and caution; to make themselves masters of the real state of facts, and to weigh and consider the whole of the subject gravely and deliberately. In proposing remedies for an evil of so serious a nature, it would be proper to remark, that they were not to be merely remedies adapted to a temporary pressure, but measures that would be lasting and permanent. As a previous step, he should propose, the appointment of a committee to enquire into the circumstances of the price of corn. The measure which was to be proceeded in, upon this occasion, would, he hoped, be facilitated by the steps which government had already taken, and which the House would refer to in the progress of its own proceeding; at the same time, much would remain for the House itself to determine: and he trusted that every member would contribute, by his own personal diligence, to further the enquiry as much as he should be able; and, by his suggestions, to assist in finding some adequate remedy for an evil of which there was too much reason to complain. He said, it was his duty to observe, that, whatever remedy should be applied, for the relief of distress, care should be taken not

Rear Admiral Lord Hugh Seymour then said;

Mr. Speaker,

I feel most sensibly the very distinguished honour which I have just received; and beg the House to give me credit for its ever operating upon my mind, in a way to increase those exertions in my country's service, for which I have been fortunate enough to have received so very ample a reward.

To you, Sir, I beg to offer my warmest thanks for the very obliging, as well as very flattering manner in which you have communicated those thanks to me.

Ordered next time, contrainante.

That what has been now said by *Mr. Speaker*, in giving the thanks of this House to *Admiral Lord Bridport*, Vice Admiral *Sir Alan Gardner* Baronet, and *Rear Admiral Lord Hugh Seymour*, together with their answers thereto, be printed in the Votes.

to injure our commerce, our manufacture, or our agriculture. Under these general impressions, he should discuss the subject; as he had paid no small share of attention to it already, it might not be improper to state some points which he intended hereafter to submit to the House. He would, first of all, propose some alteration in the law upon the subject; and, under the head of Regulation, meant to bring in a Bill for amending the law relative to the assize of bread. The necessity of this alteration was chiefly impressed upon his mind by the frequent communications which came from Government from the chief magistrate of the city of London.

Another circumstance respecting bread, was, in his opinion, extremely material to be considered, viz. regard to that which was made of fair wheat, or wheat of the first quality. As the law stood, the farmer had an interest in preventing its coming into consumption. This he should propose to remedy. A third consideration appeared to him of still greater importance than the last. He trusted that there would not be found any great inconvenience to introduce into general consumption bread not only made of wheat, but that which was to be mixed with other grain, in which, he was happy to learn, the harvest had been most abundant. Possibly also it might be made of Indian corn, a mode of remedy, which, he had reason to believe, might be successfully applied. From repeated experiments, he was enabled to state, that mixed bread of this and other kinds might be as wholesome, and as palatable, as any we had been accustomed to eat; and therefore, without inconvenience, it might be brought into general consumption. The law, he should have to propose, would include this useful substitute. When it came to be introduced into general consumption, it would be found to be a great resource against the evil of which we had at present to complain; he should therefore hope that the House would consider it as a measure which could not be too soon adopted.

Another measure he had to submit to the House was this; a considerable quantity of the flour of wheat was employed in the making of starch. This, he apprehended, might be prevented in a better way than that of the prohibiting the making of starch, which appeared to be a bad policy considered altogether. Articles which were not applicable to the food of man might be used in the making of starch. He stated this as the ground of his hope, that a considerable reduction might be made in the consumption of wheat by this article; and, under that impression, he should hereafter move for leave

to bring in a bill to prohibit the making of starch from wheat flour for a limited time:

Another point to be attended to, was the law which operated to prevent the free circulation of corn in different parts of the kingdom, although it was intended for other purposes. This he also proposed to remedy; and, for that purpose, he intended to move for leave to bring in a Bill to prevent obstruction in the transit of grain and other provisions within the kingdom. This, he trusted, would contribute, in a great degree, to the relief of distress.

These were the principal and specific measures which, in this stage of their proceeding, he thought it necessary to state; but they were not all the measures on the subject that might be necessary to be taken. Whatever should be finally adopted ought to be the result of the full investigation and pure deliberation of Parliament. He should be glad to hear the suggestions of individuals on the subject. They should take care, as far as they went, they were doing nothing but what would be safe and advantageous for the public; and, being convinced of that, they should not delay their measures longer than was absolutely necessary.

It might be asked, Why he did not bring forward another measure—a bill to prevent, for the whole of the ensuing year, the working of distilleries? To which he would answer, he did not mean to deny that some advantages would be derived from stopping the distilleries: but then, it should be recollected, that they were already stopped until the month of February, and, perhaps, that might give full time for enquiry; and, he was ready to confess, that the advantage of stopping them at this moment, for a longer time than February, would not be adequate to the danger. The distillery was an article that afforded considerable revenue, and on which, perhaps, if it should be right to give a bounty on the importation of corn, they might rely for the payment of such bounty; and, in this view, there might be a saving to the public by continuing the distillery. He did not mean to say, however, that, at all events, a pecuniary difficulty, arising from the loss of the revenue of the distillery, was to be compared with this distress; and yet it was of importance, and should not be hastily laid aside.—The first thing to be considered in this case was, the ascertaining whether bread of a mixed quality might not be usefully introduced into general consumption; whether rye, barley, oats, and potatoes, might not become greatly serviceable for that purpose, and, those considerations determined, it would be time enough to examine the propriety of stopping

stopping the distilleries. He was not ready to concur, in stopping them any longer, at present, than the time already limited for that purpose. It might, at this moment, be a rash measure. If they were stopped, it should be observed, that advantage would not all run one way. The stopping of the distillery would advance the price of one article of the food of the lower orders of the people; he meant bacon. The price of bacon depended, in a great measure, on the price of barley. These were the considerations which he had to submit to the House at present, and therefore he moved, "That the Chairman be directed to move the House, That a select Committee be appointed to take into consideration the present high price of corn; to collect evidence relative thereto; and to report the same, as it shall appear to them, to the House."

Mr. Lechmere rose, and declared that he should be sorry to say any thing that might infringe the rules of the House; if he should, he would submit to authority, and be silent; but he felt an inclination to deliver his sentiments, the subject being so extremely interesting to every man who wished to relieve the poor. He had heard the proposals made by the Minister, as part of a plan which, he said, he intended to bring forward; and, certainly, the Right Hon. Gentleman's ideas were distinctly and ably stated. It did not, however, seem to him likely, that the House should come to any effectual remedy for the evil, unless the causes of that evil were first ascertained. They ought, therefore, to be investigated, and plainly stated. What, he would ask, were the causes of the present great distress? We had perhaps had as plentiful an harvest as the Great Author of all Blessings ever gave us; the poor man, nevertheless, who ploughed the earth which produced that plenty, was starved driven to very great distress indeed, and intirely unable to support his family. Mr. Lechmere said, he had paid some attention to this subject. He had endeavoured to find out the cause of this scarcity, and he hoped the House would indulge him with a hearing, having no object but that of relieving the distresses of the poor, and to make the heart of the cottager leap with joy. Perhaps a few hints, which he was enabled to give, might produce advantages, and the poor man who tilled the soil, might reap some of its fruits. One of the great causes of the present distress, he took to be *the monopoly of farms*. The great farmer was enabled to raise an enormous quantity of corn. By his opulent circumstances, he had it in his power to withhold corn from the public market, while the little farmer was compelled to sell

sell it, be the market price what it might. It was notorious that there were now farms occupied by one man which formerly supported twelve or fourteen industrious families. He did not know that the House could remedy that crying evil; but, if they could put a stop to the future progress of it, they would do away a very great mischief. Some of these farmers had long leases, with which the Legislature could not perhaps interfere. He submitted, however, to them, whether they could not prevent the continuance of this evil in future.

The next great evil which he knew of was *jobbing in corn*. The jobbers of corn and of horned cattle, were instruments of great oppression on the people. He spoke not of the corn dealer, for there was as much difference between him and a corn-jobber as there is between a man who lends his money at five per cent. and an usurer. In order to prevent petty-fogging corn-dealers doing more mischief, he would propose that no man should be permitted to deal in that article without taking out a licence at a high price.

The next point to which he wished to call the attention of the committee was this. In the part of the country he came from, the practice was,—that the farmer came to market with a small sample in a little bag. The corn-dealer says, “If your corn is all like this, I will buy it.” The consequence was, that if a man came to market for a little corn, he was told, the farmer had sold the whole of it. He should therefore propose that the farmer should bring to market no less a sample than a bushel. This could be no object to the farmer, but it was a great object to the poor man. If he was told, it was impossible to bring all the corn to market, he could answer,—Let a proper number of granaries be erected all over the kingdom, where corn may be sold as at a market, and for a market price; and where the poor man may at least have his bushel for his money, as well as the corn-dealer. The objection which had been made to this was, that there would be a difficulty in having the corn ground. To which he would again answer, that a hand-mill would grind all the corn which a poor man could purchase. These, Mr. Lechmere said, were all the observations which he should make at present, as he did not wish to tire the patience of the House. If any other ideas should strike him, and appear likely to contribute to the public good, he should beg leave to submit them in a committee of the whole House. He declared he approved of the principle of the present measure, and he wished that, in the result of it, the poor of this country might have reason to be satisfied with the justice of that House.

Mr.

Mr. Fox said, he did not rise to oppose the measure proposed by the Minister that evening. On the contrary, he agreed with him in most of the provisions which he had stated as intended to be brought forward. He thought many of them not only good, but, perhaps, better than any others which could be offered upon the same topics. He rose chiefly to make some general observations, which appeared to him to belong to the nature of the proceeding about to be entered upon.

With respect to the assize of bread in London, the authority whence the regulation came, was of great weight, and, he believed, that some regulation would be proper. He could not, however, help fearing that the regulation proposed was not a regulation from which the distressed were likely to derive immediate benefit; because every regulation respecting bread, demanded that it should be taken up and founded on the most correct of all principles; consequently, the discussion of the subject would take up much time. Whether any fault was imputable to the farmer, he did not know, but, as far as he had heard, although it was never higher than at present, yet, according to the price of corn and meal, bread had not been higher than the proportion between meal and bread required it should be, and the bakers had by no means been gainers upon the case; therefore, he was afraid we were not likely to find an immediate remedy to the evil by this regulation in the assize of bread.

With regard to the other parts of the proceedings, as they had been opened by the Right Hon. Gentleman, it was difficult to speak until more of the matter came into detail. In the first place, however, he must observe, that the Minister spoke of palatable and wholesome bread being to be made out of a mixture of different articles with wheat. He had no doubt but that this mixture, when it came into general consumption, would be advantageous to us in times of scarcity; but when gentlemen of that House talked of "palatable and wholesome bread," they should not talk of bread for *themselves*;—they should lay that out of their consideration. Bread of a mixture was, to him, as palatable, and, for aught he knew, as wholesome, as that which was made of the finest wheat; but that was not sufficient for the *poor*. It was to them an important thing that it should be *nutritious*, as well as palatable and wholesome. He wished the House to consider that point as it really was, and to consider it attentively. Suppose, for instance, that a fourth part of this bread should be made of potatoes, then that fourth of wheat would be saved in quantity;

quantity; but this was not, to the poor, a saving of one fourth, because the quality of the bread was so far inferior to that which is made wholly of wheat, and consequently, so far an abatement of nourishment, which must be made up by other food. In looking to the thing in this view, they ought to calculate upon a very different principle from that of allowing a saving of one fourth.

Another thing, a very great and a very important one, to which he wished to direct the attention of the House was, "The nature of the scarcity." In what view the scarcity was to be taken. We were well aware that, however severe the distress, the scarcity did not arise wholly from the smallness of the produce. If wheat were the only thing that was extravagantly dear, there might be some sense in saying, the distress arose from the defectiveness of the produce, but that was clearly not the case, every thing else being also extravagant high in price, though not quite so high as wheat. Was not meat high? were not all the necessaries of life high? And yet none of those could be said to be defective in produce. Take the produce of the dairies for instance, and we should find that the weather had been as favourable as any year we could recollect, that the produce was abundant, and yet, the price of butter we should find to be, though not quite so high as wheat, yet, nearly so. Certainly at a very great and a very extraordinary price, rising from nine-pence or ten-pence a pound to thirteen-pence! All these things were high for reasons very different from that of a scantiness of produce. The difference of the comparative price of corn was not upon the whole to be considered as depending on the produce of the late harvest, supposing the produce to be below what was expected—by the way he was very far from thinking it as low as some persons thought it—still he was clear we must look to other causes for the high price. Bounties was alleged to be as plentiful this year as it ever had been, and yet, that did not contribute to the lowering of the price of wheat or any other article. The bountiful productions of the earth therefore had no effect in lowering their price. He stated these things, not so much to shew the real cause of the dearth of provisions, as to shew that the cause, whatever it might be, was a very complicated cause. How far we might ascribe it to the war, he did not then state. That the war contributed to the scarcity no man could doubt. That there were other causes, and some of them perhaps connected even with the prosperity of the country, he was not at that time about to argue. Either of these might make things

things rise gradually, and that was a question well worth the consideration of the Committee. If this rise was owing to many and complicated causes, nothing could be more mischievous to the general interests of the public than to ascribe it to any one particular cause, and to proceed as if that were the fact. He hoped the Committee would take a large and comprehensive view of the subject, and set out upon an acknowledged idea that the causes of the present distress are complicated and various, and that the remedy, whatever it might be, should be applied with the utmost care and caution.

With respect to the distilleries, he desired to know in what way the continuance of the prohibition on them was to operate, to the disadvantage of this country. It would affect the revenue, certainly, but how? By diminishing the consumption of an article, which, if there should be a loss, that would be well made up in other respects, by the effect which it would have, not only upon the pockets, but also on the morals, the health, and the industry of the laborious part of the community. It would occasion a consumption, to a certain extent, of foreign spirits, the illicit trade in which, it was not so difficult to check in time of war, as in time of peace; and upon that head there might be a considerable increase to the revenue. He therefore could not see where the mischief could be, in continuing for the whole remainder of the year, the prohibition upon the distilleries.

An Honourable Gentleman had the night stated some things with respect to the agriculture of this country, which the House would do well to meet in time. Coercive measures might last for a week, for a fortnight, or perhaps a month; but there was no permanent good policy in resorting to them: coercions and restrictions of liberty, either for men selling or letting their estates, or in buying or bartering for grain, or any other commodity with whomsoever, in what quantity or mode whatever, were, in his opinion, all radically bad; and in proportion as they were bad, they were attended, as they ought to be, with great difficulty. That this was a rule upon all occasions was more than he would pretend to assert; inevitable necessity must control every thing, and ought, however, to adhere to a good principle, while that was possible. He suggested thus much to the spirit with which he entered upon this subject, and from which he conceived the House should enter upon it. What above all he wished to impress on the House was this—That there has been a prodigious increase in the price of all the necessary

articles of life, which cannot be attributed to any failure in the produce. Many speculations have arisen upon that point; some persons think that the price of labour is too low. I confess myself, said Mr. Fox, to be of that opinion. Not only so at present, but that it has been so for many years. And I beg leave to declare freely, that strongly as I am convinced that the pay of the labourer is wholly inadequate to his living, yet the rise of all the articles necessary for existence, and the comparative lowness of the price of labour at this moment, are become such as to be, to a great majority of the labouring part of the people, really enormous grievances; and to declare further, that the great majority of the people have no longer the comfort of reflecting on, what indeed was once the best of their comfort, that they live by the work of their own hands, and not on the favour of their superiors. Now they are doomed to subsist, in a great measure, on the charity of those who, no doubt from the best motives, have lent, and I hope will continue to lend, them assistance. Such is, at this time, the condition of the once happy labourer in this country. I conceive what I have stated to be a great evil. But great as it is, I confess I have doubts whether we can remedy it by any legislative provision. I nowhere have met persons of high authority who are of opinion there ought to be a comparative rising of prices. In different districts the comparative price of labour is extremely insufficient; but how far it is wise for the Legislature to fix the price is a question which I very much doubt. I believe it is not possible to raise the price of labour equal to the present price of provisions; and I believe it to be equally impossible to reduce the present price of food to an equality with the present price of labour. But it may be of much good that this subject should be considered by this House, for the public to form a judgment upon it, and in ordering the measure may take place, which shall be a great relief to this great inconvenience—I do not know that, in the present state of things, there is any point in which I differ from the Right Honourable Gentleman on the subject, unless it be upon that of the distilleries. The only thing I shall at this time observe is, that indeed which I have repeated several times already, that we should not take up this subject in a partial view. It is an evil arising out of many and complicated causes, and if in your deliberations you overlook one or more, your proceedings may ultimately do more evil than that which you now profess to remedy."

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that he felt the highest degree of satisfaction from the speech which the Right Honourable Gentleman had just delivered: on all the leading points of that important question his opinions coincided completely with those of the Right Honourable Gentleman; and he had his hearty thanks for the clear, candid, and liberal manner in which he had expressed his sentiments upon the different views of the subject. He allowed, that the causes of the scarcity were various and complicated, and in proportion as they were so, the subject undoubtedly required the most serious and minute investigation. - He thought the scarcity of wheat was one cause in a greater degree than the Right Honourable Gentleman imagined, although the deficiency of the crop was certainly not the sole cause. He agreed that there had been great plenty of pasture, but had, he believed, been one cause of another scarcity, meant of butcher's meat, for it had induced the graziers to buy up larger numbers of cattle than they otherwise would have done, which they were afterwards obliged to send to market, but instead of being fattened, they were sent lean to market; and although the numbers might be greater, from that circumstance they yielded a lesser quantity of real substantial food. The war, while it continued, tended to a certain extent, he confessed, to produce scarcity, but the war in which we were immediately involved, was less the cause of scarcity than the general state of warfare that prevailed over all Europe, and which it was out of our power to have prevented; and this he must confess was having a very marked effect on producing that scarcity which had been so severely felt. The Right Honourable Gentleman had truly said that there were many circumstances not inconsistent with the fertility of the country, which contributed to the rise of prices. There certainly were, and even the opulence itself was one, because while the flourishing circumstances were such as undoubtedly added to the general mass of commercial riches and national wealth, it must be evident that in all the ranks of life, from commerce to agriculture, the demand must have increased very largely, and this demand, as one of the causes added to the scarcity of the produce, as the improvements in agriculture had not kept pace with this prosperity in other respects. In all that the Right Honourable Gentleman had said, there was no argument which he agreed with him more cordially than in what he had said against laying restrictions upon the sale of the property in any way which seemed most to

advantage, or was most likely to reward their industry ; and he was equally clear, that it would be an improper interference, was the legislature to lay down any precise law or rules for the conduct of those most particularly interested in the produce of grain. It was this he had particularly in view when he stated that, however impatient the House might feel to remedy in the most speedy manner a temporary grievance, which had borne very hard upon all descriptions of people, but necessarily most so upon the poor, who formed the greatest part of the community, yet he had warned them to be extremely cautious and well-informed before they adopted any specific proposition for so complicated an evil, lest they should bring on a greater, by rash interference that might eventually be productive of serious and dangerous consequences to the agricultural and commercial interests of the country—an effect studiously to be guarded against. On the subject of altering the assize of bread, he did not differ from the Right Honourable Gentleman in his general reasoning, but, for the reasons he had given, it was impossible that different kinds of bread could be made by the bakers, in any beneficial way for the public, unless regulations were adopted incompatible with the existing laws. Another matter stated by the Right Honourable Gentlemen was well worthy of attention, and in which he likewise agreed most decidedly : it was, that, while we adopted measures to encrease the quantity, we ought to take care that the quality was equally nutritious. Unless this could be done, the change would certainly be for the worse, and fall heavily on the poor, whom it was most their wish to relieve ; the consumption of bread amongst the rich being, as the Honourable Gentleman had very wisely remarked, but a small part of their sustenance. What he had in view, therefore, was, to increase the quantity of bread, of a quality equally nutritive, and at the same time to lessen the quantity of flour consumed in bread at present, and this he had reason to think might be effected. As other matters he repeated what he had said, respecting the making of starch, believing, as he did, that ingredients might be used in that manufacture, which never had been used as human food : with regard to the stopping of the distillery, he was obliged in candour to agree with the Honourable Gentleman, and to admit that the defalcation, if any should be in the revenue, would be no consideration provided it produced the beneficial effects described by the Honourable Gentleman ; if by diminishing the use of British spirits, industry was promoted, the country would gain an accession of

of strength as well as of revenue. With regard to what had been said of the diminution of the revenue being compensated by the duties on the importation of foreign spirits, he could not at that moment speak decidedly; perhaps it might open a door for smuggling; but being at present a matter rather of doubt than certainty, it was a subject worthy of the most serious attention. Upon the whole, acquiescing in the idea of the Right Honourable Gentleman, he believed it might be a great satisfaction, that the country should know without delay that this step was likely to be determined on, and that the government taking into their consideration the existing pressure of so heavy a grievance upon the people, as one means of alleviating their situation had resolved to continue the stopping of the distillery for another year, the present Bill expiring in February next.

Mr. Hussy thought that no solid objection could be made to what he had heard from the Right Honourable Gentleman, though he confessed he had come down with an intention to take the sense of the House upon the question, which he was happy to find unnecessary, as his Right Honourable Friend had anticipated all he meant to have offered on the subject.

Sir John Sinclair submitted, whether the committee ought not only to take it into its consideration to remedy the present, but, if possible, to prevent the return of any similar scarcity. When he considered the extent of the capitals employed in the distilleries, and the advantages derived from them to the revenue, he conceived that it would be proper to deliberate maturely upon the consequences, before they proceeded to put a stop to their operations. At any rate the prohibition should be confined solely to the distillation of the grain produced at home, and not extend to that imported from abroad.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he did not agree with the Honourable Baronet as to the exception of foreign grain; indeed so far from his thinking that the prohibition ought to be limited or confined to any specific subject of distillery, if possible he would rather extend the prohibition to the distillation of spirits from potatoes, and every other article of food.

Mr. Hussy said, that he had heard that potatoes had already been used in the distilleries, and it was his purpose to have taken notice of it.

Mr. Curwen said, it was to be observed, that the high price of corn had been occasioned not so much from the scarcity of grain, as from the alarm which had been created, as he understood, by the agents of government. Some disadvantages
also

also rose from drawing too much from the produce of one part of the country to alleviate the distresses of another. Much inconvenience had been experienced too in the transactions between the miller and the corn-dealer, on account of the disproportion between the prices of corn and flour. He conceived it would be worthy the consideration of the committee to enquire whether bread made entirely of barley might not answer every purpose. It would be necessary also to devise some mode for regulating the wages of labour by the price of provisions, by which means it would become the interest of the landlord not to let his lands at such a high rate as would make it necessary for the farmer to sell his grain at such high prices.

General Smith expressed his satisfaction at the unanimity with which this matter had been discussed. There were two or three observations, however, which he wished to make upon what had fallen from the Right Honourable Gentleman. He thought it necessary that the Right Honourable Gentleman should make a declaration whether or not agents had been employed by Government to buy up corn at home. He said, he had conversed with several gentlemen in different counties and in London on that subject, who informed him, that they had embarked in the importation of corn to this country from foreign markets, and were afterwards obliged to abandon their project, on account of the competition of government agents, with whom they were unable to contend, and had, in consequence, resigned their ships to government for the importation. He asked, Whether it was proper that Government should thus monopolise corn of foreign growth? and pressed for a declaration upon that point also, in order that corn-dealers and merchants might in future be able to start with fair and reasonable prospects.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* spoke explicitly in reply, and said till within these few days, he had never heard of such propositions having been made, or such ideas having prevailed, nor even then from loose rumour only. He could assure the House, that no agents had been employed by government at home, and the only grounds for such a rumour, which he could guess, were the purchases made for the supply of the naval contracts, which supplies the contractors were to procure in any way they thought proper. So far the idea of government agents at home, for the sake of monopoly, was destitute of a shadow of foundation. That agents had been employed to supply our markets with foreign corn he acknowledged, but he doubted, at the same time, whether they might tend

tend to check the speculations of individuals. It was a point that would admit of much discussion. To interfere with individual speculations, he admitted upon general principles, and looking chiefly at ordinary cases, was impolitic; but even that was justified by the peculiar exigency of the times, and was merely put in practice to bring the market to its usual level. On this occasion, he observed, that individual merchants had not to contend with the individual merchants of foreign countries; because, from the general scarcity which prevailed in Europe, foreign agents were employed to obtain supplies at any price, who could only be counteracted by the agents of our government; and it would have been unsafe, in such a situation, to have relied upon the process of individual exertions. It was also to be recollected that our agents had an opportunity of procuring a supply when merchants were unwilling to run the risk, being apprehensive, that before their arrival, the ports might be shut against importation; or that such supplies might be obtained as would disappoint the success of their adventure. Hence the merchants were in great uncertainty. Before he sat down, the Chancellor of the Exchequer declared, he recognised the general principle of avoiding any interference in their transactions.

General Smith rose again to say, he hoped that the Right Honourable Gentleman did not suspect him of having brought forward this enquiry as a matter of charge, and assured him, that he remained perfectly satisfied with the answer he had given.

Mr. Fox differed from the Right Honourable Gentleman in thinking that the peculiar circumstances of last year had justified the particular exception to general principles. He hoped however, that the committee would take the subject into their consideration. When it was enquired into, he did not doubt, but that the Right Honourable Gentleman would allow, that the market of Great Britain would have been better supplied if no such measure had been taken. This was a particular part for the Committee to consider in the course of their deliberations. If it appeared probable that the market would have been better supplied by perfect freedom, then it would be a strong argument in favour of the preference of general principles to a particular exception.

Mr. Fox added, that he had a few additional observations to make upon the effect of the war, which he considered as the gradual and operative cause, the deficiency of the harvest he believed to be the least. He, with his Honourable Friends, had contended, that the scarcity would have been, and might

still be, obviated in a considerable degree by peace, whereas the Right Honourable Gentleman had asserted, that there could be no remedy by a peace with this country. The question in consideration was not he observed, how far the scarcity would be reduced by a peace with this country simply, but how far a peace with Great Britain would influence the rest of Europe? And it was in this view that the good effects of peace ought to be calculated.

Mr. Curwen very readily and cheerfully assented to the refutation given by the Right Honourable Gentleman to the rumour of monopoly.

Sir Francis Baring said, he remembered about thirty years ago that corn was sold for three-shillings and six pence a bushel, at which time considerable quantities were exported from this country, but from that time to the present the improvement of agriculture had not kept pace with the consumption, therefore a necessity arose for a gradual and additional importation every year. So long as there was peace our supplies were constant and sufficient, but the corn trade was of that delicacy, that by touching one part of it the whole would shrink, and consequently by stopping any ship laden with grain to France, we finally must suffer. If France were in distress, and we were desirous of obtaining corn from a foreign market, he desired to know whether our guineas would not go as far or farther than her paper? He was sensible that the corn trade ought to be free, but he feared that by sending government agents upon that business, we had so far affected it, that we should not at present be able to inspire men with confidence to come forward. He also doubted whether a bounty would induce them, since corn was an article so liable to perish, and so subject to political considerations; when the question came fully however before the Committee, he hoped they would import enough to relieve the temporary distress, cost what it would.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer considered that government was perfectly justifiable and politic in preventing corn from reaching the ports of France the French, from the greater pressure of necessity which existed amongst them, would naturally have offered more than the English would give, which would make foreigners send their wheat to France in preference, if they were not deterred by our cruisers. The law of war and of nations justified the seizure of these cargoes, and every ship taken gave the double advantage of supplying ourselves and distressing the enemy.

After

After a further conversation of a few minutes continuance Mr. Ryder moved the resolutions.

First, For leave to bring in a Bill to alter the existing laws, relative to the assize of bread.

Secondly, To prohibit the manufacture of starch, from wheat or other articles of provision, and to lower the duties upon the importation of starch, and upon other articles made thereof.

Thirdly, For continuing an Act passed last session of Parliament, for prohibiting the distillation of spirits from wheat, malt, and barley, and other articles of grain.

Fourthly, To prevent the obstruction of the free passage of grain within the kingdom.

The resolutions were carried and ordered to be reported, and leave asked to sit again.

The House being resumed, Mr. Ryder reported the resolutions, and moved that a Select Committee be appointed to enquire into the causes of the present high price of corn, to collect evidence and report the same.

The following gentlemen were named of the Committee, Mr. Ryder, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Fox, Mr. Hussey, Lord Sheffield, Mr. Plumer, Mr. Buxton, Mr. Coke, Sir John Rous, Mr. Crewe, Mr. Hobart, and all the members to have voices that attend the said Committee.

A motion being made for leave to be given to bring in the different Bills, Mr. Ryder, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Attorney and Solicitor General, were ordered to prepare and bring in the same.

Mr. Hussey moved that an instruction be given to the gentleman of the Committee, to have power to make a clause for preventing distillation from potatoes.

Mr. Fox asked what obstructions the Bill was intended to prevent in the free passage of grain, unless violent and illegal obstructions were to be understood. He reminded the Right Honourable Gentleman, that nothing would contribute to render it so beneficial and cheap as a free circulation; a free circulation tends to the general benefit, and the impediments occasioned by the war, he suspected, formed no small part of the complicated causes which have contributed to produce the general scarcity. He thought the existing laws sufficient, but had no objections to the Bill, if necessary.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said, that the question to be considered was, Whether the specific penalties were sufficient to prevent violent and illegal obstructions? and which as

they had not been generally understood, this Bill was meant to enforce.

Mr. Foddrell related, that at Oxford, at the time when the Judge was coming into the town, there was a riot, in consequence of the interception of some corn on the Canal, which runs from Abingdon to Oxford. The people who intercepted it, were liable to actions, which were not entered against them, because some doubts were entertained upon the right even of internal transportation.

The motions were all carried *nem. con.*

HOUSE OF LORDS.

WEDNESDAY, November 4.

Copies of the treaties concluded between his Britannic Majesty and the Empress of Russia; and that between his Majesty and the Emperor of Germany, with the ratification of the treaty of commerce between Great Britain and the United States of America, were brought up by Lord Grenville, and ordered to lie on the Table.

The *Earl of Mansfield* also brought up copies of a Proclamation issued by his Majesty, and published in the Gazette of Saturday the 31st of October, relative to the outrages committed against his person on Thursday last, and of a Proclamation published that day (November 4) relative to seditious meetings, which were ordered to lie on the Table.

Lord Grenville gave notice, that upon Friday next he should have the honour to submit to the House, a Bill for the better securing the safety of his Majesty's Person and Government; he therefore moved that the Proclamations just laid on the Table be referred to the considerations of their Lordships on Friday, and that their Lordships be summoned.

Earl Sturges (First Lord of the Admiralty) said, that he felt the greatest satisfaction in calling the attention of their Lordships to instances of distinguished conduct and bravery in the employment of our national strength. The signal and gallant conduct of that excellent officer Lord Bridport and the officers and seamen under his command, in the victory obtained over the French fleet on the 23d of June last, be-
 part of his Majesty's fleet and a squadron of the
 could inspire but one sentiment in the mind of all
 Majesty's subjects, at least of every true Englishman. It
 not only covered the arms of this country with glory,
 but he believed and still thought, it had contributed to the suc-
 cess

cess of the campaign, and in a very high degree to secure the safety and tranquillity of the nation. His Lordship said, he had a just sense of the high distinction conferred on an officer by such a vote, as a vote of thanks by that House, but the victory of the 23d of June, the taking of three ships of the line, and the crippling others of the enemy's fleet, was certainly a glorious achievement for this country. He need not enter into further discussion to recommend the vote, he should propose, and therefore, with the most perfect satisfaction, he would move their Lordships to give a public expression of the sense they entertained of the gallant and distinguished conduct of our officers and seamen upon that occasion. He concluded with moving *seriatim et separatim* the thanks of the House to Admiral Lord Bridport, Sir Allan Gardner, Lord Hugh Seymour, with the officers, &c. under their command; as also the acknowledgment and approbation of the House to the seamen and marines, precisely in the same terms as the motions made by Mr. Dundas to the same purpose in the House of Commons on Monday last, which were agreed to *nem. diss.* and the Lord Chancellor ordered to communicate the same.

Lord Romney said, that besides the gratification of their feelings as individuals in paying the tribute of applause which was due to those who had signalized themselves in the service of their country, it was their duty to express that public testimony of approbation they were in use to bestow on the conduct of those whose actions had merited so high an honour. There was a man whose high professional character was well known to their Lordships, and whose whole life had been one continued series of active, brave, and meritorious services, the person he alluded to was Admiral Cornwallis, whose behaviour, especially upon the 15th of June last, in engaging and beating a superior Squadron of the French fleet, he conceived entitled him to every possible expression of their Lordships favour. His Lordship wished to know from the noble Earl, if he had any intention of doing the gallant officer he had mentioned, the honour of moving the thanks of the House to him, for an instance of bravery and good conduct, that had excited the admiration, and obtained the praise of all who had heard its relation.

Earl Spencer acknowledged that, when he gave notice of his intention to move the Thanks of the House to Lord Bridport and the officers under his command, he had it not in contemplation to make a similar motion with regard to Admiral Cornwallis. This, he said, did not arise from any

doubt as to the character of the officer alluded to, or from any backwardness to acknowledge his merit, for it would ill become him not to express his sense of desert wherever it was conspicuous. His sole reason was, that he understood it was not usual to move the Thanks of the House to any officer, on account of an action which did not terminate in a brilliant victory, and therefore, as the conduct of Admiral Cornwallis, meritorious as it was, did not come under that distinguished kind which was attended with success, or which could be publicly recognised in consistency with form. He had moved the Thanks to him. At the same time, he had not moved the Thanks of the House to him for that reason only, he thought it necessary to say, he had no objections that the Thanks of the House, recommended as they had been by the noble Lord, should be returned to Vice Admiral Cornwallis, whose success in fighting a superior fleet, with only a small squadron, might be ranked with any of the most brilliant victories. He would therefore take up the idea suggested by the noble Lord, and propose that "the Thanks of the House should be given to Admiral Cornwallis for his distinguished ability in the conduct of the squadron under his command, and his determined bravery in an action with a superior fleet of the enemy upon the 15th of June last," which was agreed to *nem. diss.*; and likewise that the House do acknowledge and approve of the behaviour of the officers, seamen, and marines, under his command upon that occasion; and the Lord Chancellor was ordered to communicate the Thanks of the House to Admiral Cornwallis.

On a motion it was ordered, that no Private Bills be received after Tuesday, March 2d.—Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Several accounts were brought up from the Officers of the Customs and laid upon the Table.

Mr. Rose moved, "That there be laid before the House an account of the amount of Exchequer Bills for the year 1795."—Ordered.

The Honourable Mr. Ryder moved, "That the House do on Tuesday next resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House, to consider further of the high price of corn."

Lord Sheffield said, he observed a great slowness in bringing the corn business forward.

Mr. Ryder apprehended that the noble Lord mistook the nature of the present motion. "All that was meant by it was

to keep alive a Committee of the whole House. It was a matter of form rather than any thing else. It had no reference at all to the inquiry into the causes of the high price of grain.

Lord Sheffield thought that the Committee for the inquiry into the high price of corn ought to proceed the next day.

The *Speaker* observed, that the motion before the House had no reference whatever to the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the high price of grain.

Mr. Hussey gave notice, that he meant at a future time to move for a bounty on the importation of foreign corn. He had not made up his mind, whether he should do it in the Committee which was mentioned in the present motion, or in a Committee of Supply.

The *Speaker* informed the Honourable Gentleman, that such a motion could only be made in a Committee of the whole House.

The motion for a Committee of the whole House on Tuesday next, to consider further on the cause of the high price of corn, was then put and carried.

STATE PAPERS.

Mr. Secretary Dundas brought up Copies of the Treaties of Defensive Alliance between his Majesty and the Emperess of Russia; of the Treaty of Defensive Alliance with the Emperor of Germany; and of the Ratification of the Treaty between his Majesty and the United States of America.— Ordered to be laid on the Table.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY AND NAVY.

Lord Arden moved the Order of the Day for the House to resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House, to consider further of a supply to be granted to his Majesty.

The House having gone into a Committee.

Lord Arden moved, "That it is the opinion of this Committee, that one hundred and ten thousand seamen be employed for the sea service of the year 1796, including eighteen thousand marines."

Mr. M. Robinson observed, that with respect to the West Indies there had been, as he was credibly informed, a great mortality among the soldiers: One cause of which, he understood to be, the manner in which they were transported thither. They were rendered extremely ill from the mode of their stowage, and the sort of way in which they were conveyed to the islands; and of which they died in great numbers.

Great

Considerable inconvenience would arise from this, if it be true. If there was no ground for what he mentioned, he should be contradicted. He wished to be informed.

Mr. Secretary Dundas said, if the Honourable Gentleman wished to be informed, he knew there was no difficulty in obtaining information, without having recourse to any insinuation which tended to have a bad effect on the public mind. He did not mean to say any thing against the quarter from which the Honourable Gentleman received his information; but certainly there was not the smallest degree of truth in it. He had a letter from the Commander in Chief in the West Indies, and although he had it not with him at that moment, he would venture to quote a passage of it from memory; he believed in the very words: "I must do the justice to say, that neither trouble nor expence have been spared for the accommodation of the soldiers in health or in sickness." With respect to the manner in which they were carried on board, he could affirm, that more room had been allotted to each soldier than ever had been before allowed, and their accommodation was ample for every purpose whatever. He would again assure the House that the information of the Honourable Gentleman, wherever he had it, was completely erroneous.

Mr. M. Robinson said, he would dare to assert, that the Right Honourable Gentleman alledged only what he believed upon this subject. With regard to information, he should never apply to a minister. Whenever he wanted any thing of that kind, he would state it in the House of Commons, for that was the only regular way upon such subjects. Notwithstanding what the Right Honourable Gentleman had said, he nevertheless believed there was some ground for what he at first stated. If so, there was much cause for censure. If, from any idea of saving expence, the soldiers had been improperly treated, it was very much to be blamed; for there was no economy so wretched as that which tended to sacrifice the lives of soldiers.

The question was put and carried.

Lord Arden then moved, "That it is the opinion of this Committee, that four pounds per man per month be allowed for thirteen months for the sea service, &c.—Passed.

The Report of this Committee was ordered to be received Friday.

Agreed to go into a Committee for further Supply on Friday.

Mr. Ryder brought in a bill to prohibit the exportation, and permit the importation, of corn and other provision, without

without payment of duty, &c — Read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time on Friday next.

Mr. Secretary Dunlop brought up copies of two Proclamations. The one of the 31st of October, and the other of the 4th of November, 1795.—Ordered to be taken into consideration on Tuesday next.

Mr. Alderman Curtis alluded to the loss which we had sustained by the capture of part of the Mediterranean fleet, a loss which, he said, nothing could have prevented. Our loss in the article of silk was very considerable, and therefore he hoped there would be permission to import silk of a certain sort from any country in amity with his Majesty.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* saw no objection to this.

Adjourned to Friday.

HOUSE OF LORDS.*

FRIDAY, November 6.

Lord Grenville moved the Order of the Day, that his Majesty's Proclamations should be read, and the same having been read, his Lordship said those Proclamations, and the facts they stated, were to be considered as the ground-work of the Bill which he proposed that day to submit to the consideration of their Lordships; but he saw no occasion to enter into the detail of the measure, or to argue upon the several charges and provisions of the Bill. It was he said, notorious that the evil the bill aimed to correct, had got to such an height and extent, that not only seditious papers were printed and diffused, but meetings were publicly advertised and held, at which discourses were delivered of a seditious nature calculated to mislead the minds, confound the judgment, and inflame the passions of the multitude industriously collected to hear them. To that, clearly and undeniably was to be ascribed the outrage that had lately, but too much to their Lordships knowledge taken place. It was no longer the silly pretence of some imaginary grievance, no longer the slight pretext of a wish for a parliamentary reform, that could be set up as the motive for such meetings and such conduct. That thin veil had been lately torn away, and in the face of broad day an attempt had been made directly on the person of the Sovereign. The late violent attack upon the person of his Majesty, every man must agree demanded some effective measures for the prevention of a return of similar abuses, and that attack he suspected to have been made in consequence of the licentious proceedings which had of late been suffered to take

take place near the metropolis without any notice or restriction. Indeed, the treasonable and seditious speeches and writings, which had of late been so assiduously disseminated at public meetings, together with the number of libels otherwise circulated, were so general and so notorious, that they most particularly called for the interference of Parliament. As one of the King's servants, indeed he might say as a member of that House, he felt it an indispensable duty to endeavour to check their flagitious tendency. Convinced as he was that the poison that had been so artfully prepared, and so industriously presented to the minds of the weak and uninformed, he had paid considerable attention to the most effectual and most adviseable means of applying a remedy, and his first object, as their Lordships might easily imagine, had been to turn to the law of the country and the history of Parliament, and see what precedents were to be found fit for the occasion, and how our ancestors had conducted themselves under similar circumstances. Upon reference to former periods of the history of this country, he had found precedents which shewed what measures our ancestors had thought proper to pursue in similar situations with the present. The Bill he should have the honour to submit to their Lordships that day was founded on those precedents, and was in a great measure copied from the Act in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and the Act of Charles the Second, passed soon after the commencement of his reign; acts passed in approved times, and applied to circumstances by no means dissimilar from those of the present times. In the present Bill there would be found no other variations from the Act, but such as the situation of affairs and the existing circumstances of the times rendered indispensibly necessary. The accomodating new laws to the peculiar situation of affairs and the general circumstances of the times, was what every legislator and statesman deemed to be prudent. It had been adopted by the ablest men who were ministers of this country, and he thought it would be in the highest degree negligent and criminal, if his Majesty's present servants did not on so trying an occasion follow so prudent an example. His Lordship descanted on the daring outrage that had been committed on the person of the Sovereign, and through him on the constitution of the country, and while he sincerely lamented the necessity of proposing any measure that might appear in the smallest degree harsh and severe, he appealed to their Lordships whether that necessity was not obvious; at the same time he trusted when the measure came to be clearly understood and fully discussed, he

he should be able to prove to the satisfaction of every one of their Lordships, that the Bill he should have the honour to present did not by any means exceed the occasion, or press unnecessarily on the constitutional liberty of the subject. His Lordship concluded with offering to the House a Bill entitled, "An Act for the Safety and Preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government against treasonable and seditious Practices and Attempts." And moving that it be read at length.—The Bill was read at length.

Lord Grenville then moved, that a proper number of copies be printed for the use of the House, and that it be read a second time on Tuesday next, and the Lords be summoned.

The *Earl of Lauderdale* said, he was well aware it was not usual to enter into the discussion of a Bill of so much importance at the first reading, nor did he mean to incur the danger that might result from his attempting it on the sudden, and before he had been able to turn it in his mind and examine it with due care and attention. He could not however help rising to express his surprize at the Proclamation of his Majesty in Council, and on the facts it stated. The moment he had heard of it his surprize commenced, but if he was surprized at that measure, how much more must he have been surprized at what he had heard, however cursorily, that day; and to find that a Bill of so extraordinary a nature was founded upon a Proclamation, issued apparently for the purpose, and stating facts unauthorised and unsupported in any manner whatever. When he had left the House the other night, he had left it in some degree comforted and at ease, from having as he thought heard that there was an end to all dread and apprehension of disloyalty, disaffection, sedition, or treason. He had gone home convinced from what had passed then, that every idea of disquiet, alarm, or danger, had been completely lulled by the declaration they had heard from the highest authority, and which tended to convince their Lordships and the country that one of the great objects of the war was completely fulfilled, and that all the dread and alarm which had any where existed, was quieted by the salutary effects of the Proclamation in 1792, and the subsequent measures which ministers had adopted. Let their Lordships then guess what his surprize must have been at reading the Proclamation of Wednesday, and how much that surprize must have been increased at hearing the Bill that had just been read. From the whole tenour and principle of that Bill, he must contend that it was a direct contradiction to all they had heard from

the high authority to which he had just alluded. It appeared that it would be absurd and preposterous to suppose that the former measures of government have had the desired effect, or that they had succeeded in obtaining one of the greatest objects of the war. After all they had done, they found themselves obliged to come forward with a measure ten times stronger and more dangerous to the liberties of the country than they had dared to do, even at the moment of their greatest and most avowed alarm. By the construction of the Bill, a variety of new crimes and new treasons were introduced into the criminal law of the country, and by new framing the words and phrases to describe those crimes, the Bill, upon the very first blush of it, held out a total alteration of the existing laws respecting treason, and a most dangerous innovation upon the constitution. He little expected after what had passed so recently, that ministers were about to take so strong a measure, especially on such loose and vague grounds as a pretended notoriety, without the least evidence to induce their Lordships to believe, much less to be convinced that there was the smallest connection between the persons assembled in the fields near Islington, and those who had been guilty of the flagitious acts committed upon the person of their Sovereign, in his way to his Parliament; acts which every one of their Lordships equally lamented. Upon those flagitious acts the House had done exactly what became them on the occasion; they had previously to entering upon any other business proceeded to enquire into the nature and extent of the mischief, and had voted an Address expressive of their loyalty and affection to his Majesty, and their anxiety for the safety of his person. But was a Proclamation of his Majesty in Council, he would ask a fit ground for an Act of Parliament, which was so direct and effectual an attack on the privileges of Englishmen, that had not the outrage in Westminster happened, ministers, he would venture to say, would not have dared to have brought forward? After such a Bill passed, if it should become a law, where, he would ask, was the boasted constitution of the country? The liberties of British subjects were annihilated, and what would foreigners think or say when they came to hear of it, would not they naturally be led to ridicule our pretensions to freedom, and laugh at us for so idly boasting of a constitution which could be so violently invaded, whenever ministers taking advantage of an accidental circumstance were wicked enough to attempt it. He owned his surprise was not a little increased on hearing the noble Secretary of State boast of having followed the

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wisdom and prudence of our ancestors, when he told them in the same breath, that he had thought proper to resort to such times as the reign of Queen Elizabeth and Charles II. so long after the Revolution, which restored Englishmen to the possession of their privileges, and put the constitution on its true grounds. He owned he could not suppress his astonishment that ministers should prefer precedents drawn from times infinitely more questionable than any that had passed since that glorious event. He believed no man, for instance, who knew any thing of the history of his country would select the reign of Charles the Second, as a reign peculiarly friendly and favourable to the liberty of the subject. But what was the Bill? a Bill constituting a variety of new treasons, and in every line of it trampling upon, or circumscribing the privileges of Englishmen. He repeated it, that it was most extraordinary that so strong a measure should be proposed by the noble Lord, and offered to that House, without some evidence being produced that it was necessary; however, there was no evidence of any sort brought to prove that there was the least shadow of ground to believe that the calamities stated, and the treason or sedition complained of, did actually exist, nor could the noble Lord prove that there was any thing like a spirit of disloyalty prevalent in the country at this time. In this view he thought the words of the Proclamation were wide enough in their extent, and built the whole of its strength and argument upon the notoriety of the events which it stated to have taken place. Not content, however, with that, it went farther, by stating future intention, without any thing like a fact or proof that could warrant such an anticipation of criminality. The Bill itself, as far as he could judge from only once hearing it read, spoke in language too plain to be misunderstood, and led him to pronounce, that from the moment it passed into law every liberty and privilege of the subject was done away. After the Bill passed, if the legislature should give it their sanction, no public meeting for any public purpose could be held, however legal, necessary, or useful such meetings might be, under the present laws. No meeting could be held for considering grievances of any sort, however oppressive they might be upon the people, with a view to petition Parliament for the repeal of any law which they felt or considered as a grievance. His Lordship wished them to ask themselves if that liberty would remain after passing such a Bill? He observed there was a clause in it, reserving their rights and liberties to members of either House of Parliament, that very reservation he said,

convinced him of the extent to which they meant to carry the law, by taking from all others that right and liberty which they now possess, and confining it to members of Parliament only. The exception itself proved the oppressive and arbitrary operation of the law on every description of the King's subjects; but members of Parliament. Having thus learned the wide extent to which they meant to carry this strong measure, who was there who had ever been accustomed to admire and extol the British constitution, that could pronounce there now remained any thing enviable in the situation of those who live under it. In the old constitution of France there was nothing worse, nothing more despotic nor more inconsistent with the freedom of Englishmen there, than this Bill went to create. It was the introduction of the system of terror into this country, and God knew, they had all seen what consequences had resulted in another country from the adoption of that system, and well knew how much its introduction here was to be dreaded. The fact appeared to him to be that ministers having involved the country in a ruinous and destructive war, now find that they must have recourse to extraordinary and unheard of measures as the only means to continue their mad and dangerous project; a war entered into against the sense of the people, and carried on at an expence so enormous, that it was with much difficulty indeed, that the poor could bear the pressure of grievances which it had already occasioned. In the midst of all their hardships, and with the miserable pittance which the public extravagance of the noble Lord and his colleagues had left them, he comes forward with a bill at once to deprive them of the only comfort that supported them under all their difficulties, their honest pride in feeling that they were superior to the poor of other countries, on account of their personal freedom; he extinguishes that source of solace and support; and taken from them the power of meeting to discuss the grievances which they had heaped upon them, and of every degree of liberty which they at present enjoy.

Another alarming circumstance in this bill was, that it was not brought in to check any specific or immediate danger, and was to continue during the life of the King, and even a session afterwards, which, in the mind of every thinking man, must make the whole measure still more objectionable than even the wording of the Bill itself. Another question naturally arose, Are his Majesty's Ministers, who have involved this country in a most expensive war, and almost ruined it by their extravagance; who have recently strained the

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the law of treasons to obtain a favourite object, but, happily for the country, strained it in vain; are they whom you are to trust with this extraordinary acquisition of executive power? He daily heard, with horror and surprise, of the extraordinary transactions that occurred, and the strides towards despotism that were perpetually taken. As a proof of this, it was, he said, only the other day, that he read in the public papers an account that a cook maid was brought up to a public office; and, being surprised at being sent for, asked upon what account she had been called upon to attend there? when she was told, that an anonymous letter had been sent to the Private Secretary of a Secretary of State, accusing her master of treasonable words and intentions, and describing her to be proper and competent to give such evidence as would bring him to punishment. She replied, that the whole must be false, and expressed the greatest astonishment that her master should be described as a disloyal subject, when she had every reason to think that he was a man of an opposite description. Being dismissed of course, all that came from the Bench was, that as the charge being groundless, it was a pity that the author of the letter could not be brought to punishment—a curious satisfaction for endeavouring to deprive a man of his character, upon a charge, the very suspicion of his being guilty of which, must bring on him the detestation of every one, and endanger every thing he valued in his profession and situation of life, as it left his character liable to imputation for the remainder of his days. His Lordship reprobated this proceeding, as most scandalous and tyrannical. He likewise mentioned the case of another man, who had been apprehended; but, on enquiry, no proof of criminality could be brought forward against him; he therefore desired to be admitted to bail; when the answer given him by the magistrate was, “that he could not admit him to bail, as he had received no instructions from Ministers to admit him to bail.” His Lordship reprobated, in most indignant terms, such an interference of Ministers with the execution of the laws. Ministers, he said, might or might not give such instructions to their magistrates, but the law of the land ought to instruct them very differently, and point out to them the enormity of such conduct. The dangers and alarms which ministers had created all along, he ascribed to their own private ends or views, and declared he did not consider them as arising out of any circumstances that could bear them out in the system they had pursued; under that idea, and from a view of their conduct, the Earl of Lauderdale said, he thought the danger

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to the country would be increased by putting any additional power into their hands. The present Bill, in its principle and provisions, and, in short, in every view that could be taken of it, went to a total destruction of British liberty, and when it came to be compared in its future stages, as it would be, with those old laws of times that had been held up as precedents, he was sure it would gain nothing by that comparison. After farther pointed declamation, his Lordship concluded by pronouncing the Bill one of the severest and most dangerous Bills against the rights, privileges, and liberties of the people that had ever been introduced.

Lord Grenville said, it would have been as well, if the noble Earl had waited till he had fulfilled his promise, before he had undertaken to deliver his opinion, so decidedly against the bill. Had he carefully read and examined it, sure he was, he could not have felt himself warranted to condemn it in so unreserved a manner. Indeed had the noble Earl taken the trouble to compare the contents of the bill now proposed, with the former laws upon the subject, he would have spared some of his observations, because he would have seen they were unfounded. He would, however, be very short, as he should have abundant opportunity of discussing the subject. The noble Earl charged Ministers with having been guilty of a singular contradiction. In doing so, he apprehended the noble Earl referred to the argument of the noble Lord from the Woolpack, and seemed to contend that it was there asserted, that all discontent and design against the Government of this country was done away; that all seditious practices were at end. This was not the meaning of his noble friend on the Woolpack. In answer to the hacknied charge, that the war was unnecessary, the noble and learned Lord had said, that, by the firmness of Parliament, in opposing principles which had been supported by the arms of France, and which had been industriously propagated in this country, we were yet able to debate in a British House of Lords, and still possessed the power of arguing on the advantages of the British constitution. Neither was it true, that Ministers had at any period asserted, there was a general spirit of disloyalty, or disaffection, in the people of this country. To whom did the noble Earl impute that assertion?—Who had he heard make use of it?—When did he hear it? So far was he from thinking there was any foundation for accusing the mass of the people of this country of disaffection to the Government, or disloyalty to the Sovereign, that he gloried in saying there was a general, he might almost say, an universal, spirit of loyalty in the country.

try. That there were some men, a few of them men of information and talents, who were desirous of working on the minds of others he never had affected to disown; and sorry, indeed sincerely sorry he was, they had so far prevailed, as to make some converts among the thoughtless and the ignorant. There was in the country enough of sedition, enough of treason, to call for the caution of Government: enough were infected with false and delusive notions concerning our Constitution, and even with the spirit of treason, to make it highly necessary for Parliament to interfere. They should not therefore shrink from the danger, but come boldly forward, and join in defending the rights, the liberties, the law, and the constitution of their country.

The noble Earl had scrupled not once more to introduce the old story, and to assert, that Ministers had unnecessarily involved the country in a war, and are now driven to this expedient for carrying it on. Again and again had the noble Earl made charges of this kind against his Majesty's Ministers; again and again had such charges been contradicted; and, as often as the charge should be made, so often should he contend, that his Majesty's Ministers had not brought on this war, and give a direct denial to an assertion wholly unfounded. Their Lordships had repeatedly discussed that subject, and they had repeatedly decided upon it. By their votes, they had already declared, that his Majesty's Ministers did not involve this country in the war, and certainly they did not. The French involved us in the war, by the most unprovoked aggressions; and it had been a contest among their leaders, at different times, who was entitled to the merit, as they deemed it, of having done so. With regard to the conduct of the war, Ministers had conducted it according to the best of their judgment; and he reflected with pleasure on the situation in which we at present stood, when compared with what threatened this country at the commencement of hostilities. Let their Lordships dispassionately compare our situation as it stands, with what it might have been if they had suffered the Constitution to be subverted by those malignant men who had that purpose in view. He assured the noble Earl, that he was perfectly ready to debate the question with him whenever he chose to bring it forward, and he might be assured, he would never shrink from the assertion, that Ministers had not involved their country in the war.

When the provisions of the Bill came to be argued, he should maintain the necessity of the measure. He would prove, to the satisfaction of their Lordships, that it did not
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increase the number of treasons, as the noble Earl had asserted, that it declared nothing to be treason that was not so already; that it created no new crimes, nor did it in the smallest degree interfere with the right of the people to meet in legal and peaceable assemblies. Lord Lauderdale called out, *hear! hear!* He repeated it, in legal and peaceable assemblies; and that the law which was proposed to be enacted by this Bill, had for many years been the law of this country. He did not know there was any other point in the speech of the noble Earl which required to be answered. Whenever he stated his objections to the Bill, he should meet those objections, and would not fail to answer them. But he must be allowed to add, he was confident, that so far was this Bill from being an offence to the people of this country, that it was a measure to be desired by them for their protection. None could be made to suffer by it except those who knew their conduct and intentions were wicked, and such, every man would agree, ought to be punished. It was only a Bill to prevent treason. Lord Grenville concluded with moving that the Bill be printed.

The *Duke of Bedford* said, he did not rise to object to the motion for printing the Bill, nor did he mean in the present stage of the business, to enter into the full discussion of the subject, but he thought it by far too strong a measure, and saw already, that he could not support the Bill. He was convinced that while it was yet in their power to assemble, the people of the country would meet, and display a sense of this attack upon their abilities, so marked and decisive, as would induce their Lordships to abandon the design of carrying forward the Bill. At present he should content himself with objecting to the principle of it.

The *Earl of Radnor* said, he did not mean to object to the proposition, nor would he at present pledge himself to support it, but he would say from what he had heard, he saw no reason to complain of the Bill. He rose to say a word or two, on a point that he had often thought of, and considered with a view to himself. He was not sure, that in the remarks he had to offer, he might not tread on delicate ground, and not please nor afford satisfaction to any noble Lord present; what he wished, was seriously to recommend to the attention of government the statute of Edward III. which was the foundation of the Laws of Treason in this country, and upon which the persons arraigned for High Treason last winter had been tried. Doubts had arisen in the interpretation of it, as if it gave encouragement to what was known by the name of Constructive

frustrative Treason. Whereas it was, in his view of it, passed purposely, to prevent the subject from being brought to trial for Constructive Treason. If the House would allow him for a moment to state himself to be an honest jurymen, he must say, that notwithstanding, that Judge Eyre in his charge to the Grand Jury told them, that if it were proved and brought home to the prisoners, that they had conspired to compass the death of his Majesty, they must find the Bill a true Bill, and that they must ultimately be convicted, he should have held himself conscientiously bound to acquit them. The prisoners had been acquitted, because as he imagined the Jury thought the facts charged against them had not been proved or brought home to them, yet he meant to state, that even in the case of the charge having been proved upon them, had he been a Jurymen, he should have acquitted every one of the persons arraigned, as they had been tried for Constructive Treason, which the statute of Edward III. he conceived, was expressly designed to prevent. His Lordship said, he might possibly be thought an odd man, but so far from being afraid to constitute new Treasons, he rather wished to do so than not. If it were thought that certain offences not in the purview of the act, 25 Edward III. ought to be considered and punished as High Treason, why not make them High Treason at once, and enact that they were so. By so doing, men would be taught to take warning, to understand what crimes they were committing, and what punishment they were incurring, and to know the extent of their danger; they would consequently feel the necessity in point of prudence, of conducting themselves accordingly. The Earl observed, that the judges were directed if they found any doubt in a case tried under the statute of Treasons, to apply to Parliament for advice and assistance, but that practice their Lordships knew was grown into disuse, and therefore it was the more necessary to make the Law of Treasons as definite, as simple, and as easy, to be comprehended as possible. Having treated these topics constitutionally, his Lordship sat down.

Earl Hepatoun said, he did not rise with any intention to debate the Bill in that stage of it, but to caution noble Lords against using warm and strong language upon a subject so important, that it ought to be debated and discussed with greater coolness, with great temper, with sound discretion and sober judgment. He believed that the language used by a noble Lord (*Lauderdale*), was not meant to excite or diffuse any dangerous alarms, but arose merely from a natural warmth

of temper. Such expressions, however, he thought should be avoided, or at least he wished they might not be indulged in.

Lord Lauderdale said, it was necessary for him to say a word or two in reply; he wished not the noble Lord who had just sat down, but the House, and even the public, should be undeceived with regard to the construction put upon the language he employed. He certainly deprecated the idea of exciting any ferment in the minds of the people, but he considered the expression alluded to, as the feeblest which his most sober and deliberate judgment could have suggested; and by no means dictated by the heat of temper, the ardour of debate, or the warmth of manner, which belonged to his speaking on almost every occasion. He should certainly employ terms of reprobation much stronger, when the Bill was printed and came to be discussed. He said he rose also to observe, in reply to what had fallen from the noble Secretary of State, that it clearly appeared from the noble Lord's own declaration of his belief in the universal loyalty of the inhabitants of this country, that by the measure, for which the conduct of only a handful of men furnished the pretence, the whole people of England were to be punished in the abridgment of their liberties.

Lord Grenville said it would, he believed, in the opinion of all their Lordships, be enough for him in reply, to refer them to what he had before said, and that it would not be necessary for him to urge any further argument. In respect to all he had to say upon the subject, he should reserve himself for the future stages of the Bill.

The question was then put, That the Bill be printed. Ordered.

Adjourned till Monday.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

CORN LAWS.

Mr. Ryder moved the Order of the Day, for the second reading of the Bill, to prohibit generally the exportation, and to permit generally the importation of Corn, &c.

The Bill was read a second time, and ordered to be committed to a Committee of the whole House on Monday next.

Mr.

Mr. *Wilberforce* brought up a Petition from *Claro* in *Yorkshire*, complaining of the bad effects of selling Corn, otherwise than at publick markets, and submitting it to the wisdom of the House.

Referred to the Committee appointed to consider of the causes of the high price of Grain.

Mr. *Hobart* brought up the Report of the Committee of Supply, by which 110,000 Seamen, including 18,000 Marines, and four pounds per month per man, &c. were voted.

The Resolutions were read and agreed to.

Mr. *Rose* moved, that on Monday next, the House should resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House, to consider of Ways and Means for raising a supply.—Ordered.

Mr. *Rose* then gave notice, that on Monday he should move the annual duty on Land and M. L.

The House agreed to go into a Committee on Monday next, to consider further of a supply to be granted to his Majesty.—Adjourned.

MONDAY, November 9.

William Gore Langton, Esq. for *Somersetshire*, was introduced and sworn.

A Petition for *Colne Roads* was presented, and referred to a Committee.

A Petition from the Debtors at *Devon* was presented. Ordered to lie on the Table.

Wade's Mill Roads Bill was presented and read.

Mr. *Greville* acquainted the House, that his Majesty had received their Address, and given orders that the proper officers do furnish the House with different estimates and accounts for the service of the year 1796.

CORN.

Mr. *Ryder* observed, that there were reports of Committees that had formerly inquired into the high price of grain, which might be proper to be perused by the present Committee appointed to inquire into the same subject. He therefore moved, that such a number of copies of the Report of the Committee of the 21st of December, 1772, made by the Committee upon the law then in being, relative to the assize of bread, be printed, as shall be sufficient for the use of the Members of the House.—Ordered.

He also moved that a sufficient number of copies of the Report of the Committee of the 14th of June, 1774, appointed to consider of the method of making bread from wheat flour, &c. be printed, as shall be sufficient for the use of the Members of the House.---Ordered.

Mr. *Ryder* then moved the Order of the Day, on the Bill for prohibiting generally the exportation, and permitting generally the importation of Corn, &c.

The Bill passed the Committee of the whole House, and the Report was ordered to be received to-morrow.

The House in a Committee of Ways and Means granted the annual duties on Land and Malt, and the Report was ordered to be received next day.

Deferred the further Committees of Supply, and Ways and Means, to Wednesday. Adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

TUESDAY, Nov. 10.

The *Duke of Portland* presented a petition to the House from the city of Bath, signed by an immense number of persons residing in that city, stating their abhorrence of the outrages and insults committed against his Majesty's person and the dignity of Parliament, upon the first day of the session, and praying that their Lordships would take such steps as might tend most speedily and effectually to bring the offenders to punishment, and prevent the commission of similar crimes in future, which was read at the table.

NEW TREASONS AND SEDITION BILL.

Lord Grenville moved the Order of the Day. He began a very perspicuous and closely relative speech, with saying that he rose pursuant to the notice he had given on a former day, to move the second reading, and state the provisions of the Bill for the safety and preservation of his Majesty's person and Government against treasonable and seditious practices and attempts. His Lordship said, he had already explained the general grounds upon which this bill was brought in, and the necessity which urged it. The circumstances of the late indecent, daring and treasonable outrage on his Majesty's person in his way to Parliament were so notorious, that when all the facts were collected, no man in or out of that House he believed would venture to question the necessity of the measure, and he had the less to say upon that stage of the Bill.

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But he could not sufficiently express his surprise at the tone in which the Bill had been taken up and with which it was obviously intended to be treated. The fact set forth in the preamble was undeniable, a body of proof upon that head was already before their Lordships. In addition to that evidence they had his Majesty's Proclamation, grounded upon enquiry and examination. That such a meeting had been held in the field, but three days previous to the meeting of Parliament, no man could hesitate to believe; no man likewise could doubt for a single moment that the daring outrage committed on the person of the Sovereign, and in it a most unprecedented insult on the dignity and freedom of Parliament followed from the seditious speeches, and libellous and treasonable papers delivered and circulated at that meeting. The provisions the Bill contained were, as he had before told their Lordship, founded on the precedent of former reigns and approved times, and differed in no way from the acts which had been adopted as prudent and wise by their ancestors, but as the existing circumstances of the times demanded; there might be a few variations, but these were regulated as he had said by the difference of existing circumstances. As those Bills had been thought the most proper for the times in which they were passed, so in the present only varied from them in such respects as their ancestors had wisely governed themselves by; namely, the varying events of the times. The Bill might, he said, be divided into two parts: The first for the safety and protection of his Majesty's person; the other for the punishment of seditious crimes against the State. On the first he did not expect there would be any difference of opinion; and on the second, he repeated what he had said on a former day, the Bill created no new treasons, and therefore it did not provide any punishments for crimes that were not already recognized as crimes by the existing laws, excepting that it was intended by the present Bill to include treasonable publications and discourses, as equally criminal and dangerous with the acts stated to be treated by the laws now in force. To devise or compass the King's death was already treason, and the whole of that part of the Bill was grounded upon the solemn opinions of the best lawyers in this country, and the best writers upon the subject of the treason laws. There could not his Lordship said, be a doubt but such compassing or conspiring against the King's person and government as was specified in the Bill, amounted to that degree of guilt which called for the most severe punishment, whether it amounted to levying civil war against the King, or encouraging foreign enemies, or by writing

writing, printing, or publishing, the effect of the crime was the same, and the punishment ought to be so likewise. The first clause constituted no new treason, and would any man venture to assert that compassing or conspiring the death and destruction of the Sovereign was not treason, or that it ought not to be so declared? The provisions of the Bill had been made upon the same principles as the Acts of Queen Elizabeth and Charles II. to which he had alluded on a former night, and were in fact as much similar as the existing circumstances of the times would admit; and it having been found that difficulties sometimes arose in the construction of the Acts in force, it was intended by the variations from them in this Bill, to ascertain and specify precisely the meaning which was to be given to the whole of the treason laws. One alteration he meant to move when the Bill came into the Committee, about which an alarm had been industriously spread, and great pains had been taken to poison the public mind, viz. that part of the first enactment which subjected malicious and advised speaking to the penalties of the law described in the Bill; in the Committee, if the Bill were sent to a Committee, he should move to omit the words *malicious and advised speaking*, and there would then remain nothing in that part of the Bill which was not already acknowledged by the existing laws to be treason. With regard to the clause respecting sedition, it did not interfere with the present laws, nor prohibit acts or meetings which are at present deemed legal, but in some cases it provides a more adequate punishment to the degree of crime than the existing laws apply, it having in many instances been found that though the crime was sufficiently proved, the law did not attach an adequate punishment. The remaining provisions of the Bill, were his Lordship said, all of a nature favourable to the persons who might be accused, and might be considered as provisions to secure the liberty of the subject, under circumstances which would warrant a greater degree of coercion and restraint than in ordinary cases ought to be allowed. Having taken this general view of the Bill, and said he would reserve what he had further to say, until he heard what possible objections could be made to it; and, he confessed, he should most anxiously listen, and like to hear what grounds those noble Lords had to go upon, who had taken up this business in so high a tone upon its introduction into the House. He then moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

The Duke of Bedford rose, but was interrupted by the Clerk to read the Bill; when

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Lord Thurlow said, that the words, "That this Bill be read a second time," had certainly been said from the Wool-sack, which had happened accidentally a thousand times, but when any noble Lord wished, in that stage, to interfere, and deliver his sentiments, the rigid punctilio, of order was usually dispensed with.

The *Duke of Bedford* said, he had objected to the principle of the Bill on the first reading, and must still object to it, having heard nothing like an argument in support of it. He should not, for various reasons, attempt to follow the noble Lord much into the detail of the Bill before them, in its present stage, though, he owned, he was very much astonished at the manner in which the noble Lord had prefaced his motion for the second reading of it. When the noble Secretary of State first proposed this Bill, he reserved himself till a future period, when he promised to give the House full satisfaction respecting his motives for bringing it in, and the necessity that existed for so strong a measure; but that day, when the time was come that this promised explanation might reasonably be expected, the noble Lord had contented himself with the round assertion—That no Lord of Parliament, or man out of it, could doubt either the facts stated in the preamble of the Bill, or the necessity of the measure, and had therefore called upon them for their immediate acquiescence. It did not become him to state what were merely his own opinions upon that necessity; but certainly it became the duty, and was consistent with the dignity of parliament, to have before them some sort of evidence upon which that necessity could be founded, and of which they now possessed no materials whatever to guide their opinions. There could be no difference of opinion, certainly, that a most daring and flagitious outrage had been committed against the Sovereign on the first day of the session: every man in and out of that House must reprobate such crimes and earnestly wish to see them punished in an adequate and exemplary manner; he must, however, assert that the Bill did not meet its professed object, but was totally foreign from it, as he saw nothing in the Bill that tended in the least to give additional security and protection to the person and life of the Sovereign; he saw nothing more than what the existing laws provided for, and he did expect, if ministers came forward with any measure founded on the late outrage on his Majesty, they would have come forward with an efficient measure. The second part of the Bill was founded upon the proclamation against certain meetings which had been held. He begged

leave

leave to submit to the House, Whether it was not inconsistent with their dignity to proceed to so serious and solemn an act as the introduction of this extraordinary and dangerous Bill, without having before them any proof of any sort, that the proceedings of those meetings had rendered such a strong measure necessary. When, upon a former occasion, the same ministers had thought it proper to adopt a very strong measure (the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act), they had not dared to propose it without previously instituting an enquiry, by appointing a Select Committee, who reported to the House a mass of evidence which gave their proceedings at least an appearance of deliberation; in the present instance, on the contrary, they seemed to disregard all idea of deliberation, enquiry, or evidence, and, merely because an outrage of the most daring and flagitious kind had been committed on the first day of the session, they were to be satisfied that such dangerous consequences were likely to follow, that nothing but this strongest of all measures, and most destructive of British Liberty, could possibly prevent them. He gave the noble Secretary of State credit for being sincere in his belief that a Bill of that extraordinary tendency was necessary, but it was not enough that the noble Lord should declare that he was satisfied on this point; parliament ought to know the necessity of the measure and to acknowledge it before they adopted the Bill. If any of the persons guilty of the outrage he had alluded to were to be apprehended, and it should be found that there was no law in the country by which they could be adequately punished, a new law ought to be made for that purpose, that those who afterwards might attempt any thing similar should not escape justice; but in the present Bill there was nothing even of this sort, not one clause that went to render the King's person more safe, nor the punishment of such traitors greater, than it was under the existing treason laws. He wished the noble Secretary of State would explain the law as far as it regards the King's life, being any ways defective, or wherein this Bill was likely to amend it. His Grace said, he equally lamented and wondered that ministers should have selected their precedents from times previous to the Revolution, times which the noble Secretary of State had termed "Approved times." He had little imagined that the noble Lord would have so far forgotten what he and the nation owed to those who brought about the Revolution, as to speak of the reigns of Elizabeth and Charles II. as models for example, or as furnishing precedents to act upon in the present day. †

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What would the opinions of those great men be who assisted in driving from the Throne a family, by whose intrigues the religion and government of the country was so long distracted by every species of disaster and ruin, to make room too for that illustrious line which had since filled it with so much happiness and prosperity to the nation, were they to look up from their graves, and hear the noble Lord taking his precedents from the times he had mentioned? It was to be remembered that Queen Elizabeth's title was disputed, and, for that reason, some particular application and extension of the law of High Treason might be wise, or, at least, it might be justified on the plea of political expediency. In Queen Elizabeth's time, these laws were chiefly directed against bulls issued by the Pope, and when the country was in a very distracted state, both from foreign and domestic foes; and in Charles the Second's reign, these measures were adopted when he was just restored to the throne, after a twenty year's absence, and when a strong party of republicans remained attached inveterately to their prejudices against monarchy; when the minds of men also, all over the country, had been alienated from their loyalty and obedience to their Sovereign, under circumstances like those, such laws might be absolutely necessary for the protection of King Charles the Second. What analogy or resemblance, did such times, he would ask, bear to the present? The situation of his Majesty and that of the country were directly the reverse? Even allowing that some bill was necessary for the greater protection of his Majesty, there was nothing in this Bill calculated to secure that object. He reminded the House how soon the deposition and murder of Richard the Second followed the statute of Treason, passed in his reign; and said, God forbid that parallel should hold! but the most fatal consequences might follow from an extension of the treason laws, without necessity, and so he had a right to say of the present Bill, as the clauses of it did not apply a preventive or remedy for the mischief stated in the preamble. If it were a Bill to be passed at all, it ought to be a permanent, not a temporary, Act. The Duke complimented his noble friend (the Earl of Lauderdale) on his argument when the Bill was first introduced, and said, he entirely concurred with him in thinking the Bill a wanton but violent attack on the privileges of Englishmen. As the noble Secretary of State had declined going into the detail of the Bill farther, until it went into the committee, he would do the same; but having heard no argument in support of it, he must object to it, though as ready as any man

to agree with such a measure as really promised protection to the person of the Sovereign.

The *Earl of Lauderdale* rose next, and said, the ideas and sentiments he had stated, on the first blush of the Bill, now stood fully confirmed; that considering the magnitude and importance of the question, as well as the manner in which the noble Lord had pledged himself on a former night, when he had reserved his opinions for future discussion, he did expect that some argument or reasoning would have been offered in this stage of the Bill, that might tend to convince the House of the necessity of such an extraordinary measure; but still the noble Lord had left the question as naked as when he first introduced it, contenting himself, as his noble friend the noble Duke had remarked, with the round assertion, that the measure was grounded on a necessity so notorious that the world at large knew and acknowledged it, without condescending to go into any examination of facts, or adducing any proof that could, in the smallest degree, support the proposition he had brought forward. The Petition from Bath, presented by a noble Duke (the Duke of Portland) and the Proclamation of the King in Council, his Lordship said, both held out an assertion, that there was a positive connection between the meeting of the Corresponding Society, and the outrages which took place on the first day of the Session. Such insinuations had been made elsewhere, but no shadow of evidence had been offered to prove the connection between that society and the insults offered to his Majesty, excepting that the one happened about three days before the other took place.

He could not suppose that the noble Lord's mind was sufficiently strong on this point to induce him to say that he believed there was any such connection, although men were often inclined to believe what they wished to be true. The noble Lord, however, had confidently said, that no man doubted the fact, that the outrage upon the King, which they all lamented, was ascribable to the meeting in the fields near Islington. He would tell the noble Lord, that he doubted it, and that upon his honour he did not believe that there was the smallest connection between the London Corresponding Society and the mob, who committed the outrage in Westminster on the first day of the Session. The London Corresponding Society had no more to do with it than his Majesty's Cabinet. The Cabinet were ten times more involved, because, by their commencement of the war, and by their management of it, they had reduced the lower order of people

people to the most abject and intolerable distress; was it to be wondered at, therefore, if some thirty or fifty infuriated individuals, in a mixed assembly of perhaps 100,000, should break out and vent their indignation in any manner that the irritation of the moment suggested? It was, in his mind, much to be lamented, that they should have done so, but he did not believe the London Corresponding Society were more chargeable with what had happened than any of their Lordships. For his part, he knew no more of the proceedings in the fields, than what he had learnt from the Lord Chancellor of England on the wool-sack, who had told them all, when he condescended to become a reporter, and state the account which the Telegraph gave of what happened in the fields near Islington; but supposing that all the acts charged on the London Corresponding Society were really committed by them, they were, in his consideration, trifling indeed, when put in comparison with the calamities brought on the country by his Majesty's ministers. His Lordship said, it became the duty of the noble Lord, as it was the duty of the House, to examine into facts before they adopted such precedents as the noble Lord had quoted to them, and in the case of the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, ministers had not ventured to promote it, without going into a previous enquiry and investigation of facts; they did not ask it on the production of pikes or a speech, but after a minute enquiry in a Select Committee, where a voluminous body of examinations, drawings, and evidence furnished what they thought a plausible reason for adopting that measure. He could only account for this difference of conduct in two ways; first, that upon the former occasion there was no danger by going into an enquiry, because the facts were not true; and secondly, on this occasion if the facts were found to be true, the proposed remedy was so much weaker than the mischief to which it was to be applied, that it could produce no salutary effect. As far as was yet known, the allegations upon which the present measure was founded were so general, that no man could believe them upon such authority. He said, he agreed entirely with the noble Duke in thinking that the precedents taken from the reign of the Stuarts, in which the noble Secretary of State had told them the Bill was founded, were badly selected, and not by any means from good times. The precedents in the reign of Charles II. did not apply at all to the present case, nor was the situation of the country at present such as to require such a statute. No man, his Lordship contended, felt more loyalty and attachment to the King and Constitution than he did, and was more proud of

what he said, he was ready to rest solely on his conduct on the present Bill, compared with that of his Majesty's ministers; while they wished to increase and extend the severity of the penal laws, they did nothing to protect or secure the personal safety of the King. He recited the preamble of the statute of Queen Mary, which states, that severe punishments were not the best means of protecting the life of the Sovereign, but that the surest way was to promote the real love of the King in the hearts of his people, which was the best safe-guard and security any King could enjoy. By what acts, or in what manner, the Petition from Bath had been procured, it was pretty easy to guess; and others of the same convenient tendency would doubtless be brought forward; but he had no doubt in his own mind, that the spirit of Englishmen was still so much alive, that petitions of a very different nature and tendency indeed would be sent up, and their Lordships would find themselves addressed in another sort of language. The noble Secretary of State had been pleased to mention the high tone he had held on a former night; his tones were generally much the same, as his manner of speaking was generally pretty warm and earnest; he could, however, assure the noble Lord, that he had heard nothing that would incline him to diminish in tone, particularly experiencing the benefit derived from what he had said already upon the subject. It had induced the noble Lord to give up one strong point, a concession for which he was extremely thankful, but that being the case, he was inclined to raise his tone still higher, if he thought he could possibly obtain further concessions, or make the Bill yet more palatable by any exertions of his. With regard to his mode of marking the noble Lord's speaking, he believed it was no ways uncommon, and having listened attentively to what the noble Lord said when he gave up the point of *malicious and advised speaking*, he could not lose that opportunity of offering him his gratitude for the encouragement he gave him, that by persisting in opposition to this Bill, more good consequences might ensue, and that it would be an injury to the public were he to stop at that stage of the business. It was not for the noble Lord's arguments, but his concessions, that he thanked him. The Bill, as the noble Secretary of State had said, was not an exact copy of any former law, for there were expressions in it to which no precise meaning could be affixed; in fact it was an entire new law, not less favourable to the subject than that which passed in the reign of Richard II. and when they reflected on the events that followed, God forbid, he said, that the noble Lord had any thing prophetic in view by the present measure,

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but the records of our history proved, that the increasing the number of severe penal statutes, especially the statutes of treason, tended more to provoke insurrection and endanger the safety and existence of monarchical government, than to protect the latter and preserve the publick tranquillity. His Lordship repeated what he had said on the former night, that the exception in favour of Members in Parliament, proved that the restrictions were meant to prevent all others from meeting for any public purpose, and that consequently it would take from the subjects the right to assemble to settle a Petition to Parliament to amend or repeal a law, which they felt or considered to be a grievance. The right of granting money in the other House of Parliament, reminded the noble Lord of the precedent mentioned of the 13th Charles II. In the very same sessions it was asked by the Crown, and the Commons granted three years pay to the army, to be levied by his Majesty's Lords Lieutenants of counties. He asked whether that was an instance of the good times of that reign? Perhaps if ministers were not checked in their career, they should have some such proposition made by the present Chancellor of the Exchequer. As yet, with all his popularity, he believed the noble Lord's colleague in the other House would not venture to bring such a proposition forward. If they talked of precedents from better times, why had the noble Lord chosen to pass over the first years of the reign of King William? Had there then been no danger to the person of the Sovereign, and the safety and security of the government? The acts passed in that reign would have been as good models to copy from as those in the reign of Charles the Second. He recurred to the statute of Edward III. which at present was reckoned the best definition of the treason laws, and which he concluded was very different from the present Bill. When this Bill was introduced without any sort of evidence for its necessity on a former night, some noble Lord had imagined it came from some sinister views into the House; he was one who thought so, and was since confirmed in that opinion. He compared the preamble of the Bill with its contents, and denied that there was any thing in it applicable to any circumstances that were known to exist, or called for on account of the meeting that had been alluded to. That part of the Bill concerning misdemeanours, struck him as infinitely more dangerous than the other, for where treason was the crime, and a man's life was at stake, both judges and juries acted with more hesitation, and of course the subject was better guarded and more safe, than when

when merely property or the personal liberty of the subject were at stake. The words of the second enacting clause, he considered as a libel on the times in consequence of words being put in that were never before used; for instance, the word *constitution*—who could define the constitution in an act of parliament? Law and government could be defined, but he had good authority, from a pamphlet which he imagined was well known to ministers, to say that the word constitution could not. His Lordship read a paragraph from the pamphlet to which he alluded. From the wording of this clause, he must insist, that it created new crimes by new phrases. The word *people* came under the same uncertainty as constitution, and was not, he said, to be found in other acts. He still, however, conceived the reservation in favour of members of parliament to be the most dangerous innovation of the laws, and when laws were either strained to a degree of oppression, or new laws made totally subversive of the liberty of the subject, it must be expected, and would follow, that the people would resort to force. He was supported by great and known authorities in saying, that times and circumstances might be such as not only to justify, but to make resistance become a duty, and, in certain instances, he should feel himself compelled by a sense of duty to resist an act of parliament founded in tyranny and oppression, if prudence did not restrain him. He was much against parliament giving great latitude to judges by any new powers. There never had been, he said, an instance of either judges, or the legislature, stretching their proper functions, but it had been followed quickly by consequences of the most fatal tendency. He mentioned the case of the Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1640, when it was held that an attack on a privy counsellor was levying war against the king. With regard to peers, in all former Bills of this sort, there had been a clause stating that they should be tried at law, but in this Bill it was omitted, and upon consideration that question would become hard upon the order to which he had the honour to belong, who, if any of them should have the misfortune to be tried for a misdemeanour after this Bill, were in a situation very different from that of an English peer, as, by the law of Scotland, fourteen years' transportation might be passed on him or any other person convicted of the misdemeanour of sedition, whereas the Bill limited the punishment, even upon the second conviction, in this part of the dom, to seven years' transportation at the utmost.

Lord Lauderdale concluded a very pointed and able speech observing, that if the present Bill was only one of a series

series of measures of the same tendency; possibly a worse was yet to be introduced; it was therefore truly alarming. He deplored the situation of Englishmen under such a Bill, and thought a little sedition so far from drawing down such heavy denunciations, should but be considered as the natural effects of mens minds, and the only consolation that a starving people could have, who are destitute of wherewithal to engage and amuse their intellects, to feed their bodies, and without a hope left behind. War was the cause of all their calamities. Ministers had disgraced the English character through every quarter of the globe. Nothing but a long series of defeats, disgraces, losses, and perplexities are to be seen, without a single action that could rescue the glory and honour of the nation from scorn and derision. The military character abroad was disgraced through this mismanagement of ministers. The effects of war are losses abroad and famine at home. Let ministers, if they seriously intend to reform those abuses, repress their own pride, and not by their falsehoods libel the people of England. It is to the spirit of the people we owe our liberties, which if it had not rose in proportion as the prerogative was strained, we should have lost long ago. Sorry was he to see their calamities and distresses increase, and much more so when he saw no likelihood of their being at an end. With regard to any improper motive that might be ascribed to him for his opposition, their Lordships might be assured it was not the desire of a place, because considering the situation of public affairs, the calamities of the country, and the melancholy prospects before them, all proving the mismanagement of ministers, he must be a madman indeed, who would wish to come into office at this time, and share in the heavy responsibility of his Majesty's present servants. He concluded ultimately with declaring that he should vote against the Bill.

The Lord President (the Earl of Mansfield) began his with promising their Lordships, that they should hear her declamation nor inveictive from him, in both of which the noble Earl, who had just sat down, was to promise to indulge himself; but, differing from the noble Lord upon so many topics as he did, he must leave it to the extraordinary eloquence of the noble Earl, to amuse their Lordships with a display of argument so extraordinary, that he, with great humility, felt himself bound to confess, it was beyond his grasp, and the manner in which much of the reasoning of the noble Earl bore upon the Bill in question, he fairly owned, he was at a loss to comprehend. He meant to confine himself as close as possible to the point under consideration, in order to prevent him from tiring their Lordships' patience:

but

but, before he went into the subject, he had thought it necessary to premise what he had just said. The noble Earl had announced his speech by declaring, that he had many objections to state, and much argument to offer, to satisfy their Lordships that the Bill ought not to pass. He had listened to the objects of the noble Earl with all the attention he was master of, and had heard little of substantial objection, little like rational argument against it. That it was a measure of great magnitude and importance, and seriously called upon their Lordships (who were equally bound to protect the person of their sovereign, to guard the safety and security of the government, and to take care there should be no encroachments on the liberties of the people) were matters that no man could venture to deny. In one particular, he perfectly agreed with the noble Earl, viz. that it was unwise to place so much confidence in the integrity of Ministers, as to trust them with extraordinary and unprecedented powers, and thence invest them with an authority which they might easily abuse. Such a degree of power he would not willingly repose in the hands of any man; nay, he should even hesitate to trust the exercise of it to the moderation of the noble Earl.

The sole question for their Lordship's consideration was, whether there was occasion for any measure for the better protection of the person of the Sovereign, and the better security of the government; and how far the present Bill was adapted to that occasion. The abominable and daring attack recently made on his Majesty, in his passage to Parliament, was an outrage too notorious to be doubted for a moment, it had been proved by evidence adduced at their Lordship's bar, and by the common consent of all men, that a stone had been thrown at his Majesty while in his carriage, and if his Majesty could not meet his Parliament in safety, how was the constitution and government of the country to be preserved? Exclusive of this indication of the dangerous spirit of disloyalty and distrust, which certain descriptions of individuals attempted to raise, and but too successfully, in the minds of the uninformed and inconsiderate, the temper of the times loudly called for the utmost precaution on the part of the legislature, to guard against the introduction of that detestable scene of anarchy, bloodshed and violence, presented in a neighbouring country, that had provoked so much abhorrence from every man of feeling and humanity in every circumstance of the case, where its progress had been so rapid, and had occasioned the unfortunate inhabitants of the most fertile and unparalleled series of calamities.

lamities. The necessity and pressure of the occasion were therefore too evident to admit of dispute, and the sole question that remained was, the consideration of the nature, extent, and effect, of the proposed Bill.

In proportion to the existing circumstances of the time, it had been the practice of the ablest and the wisest statesmen that ever bore a share in the government of this country, to vary and adopt the criminal laws, and especially the laws of treason, to those circumstances. Looking back for a century past to our history, noble Lords would find, that such had been the invariable practice, and a most prudent practice it undoubtedly was. In conformity to that practice the present Bill had been framed. It was not, as the noble Earl, and those Lords who thought and acted with him, an extension of the treason laws, or a bill creating new treasons, but a close copy of the statute of Elizabeth, and the act of the 13th of Charles the Second, with such variations only as the existing circumstances of the times absolutely called for. Could their Lordships forget the provisions of the act passed in the reign of William the third and Queen Anne for the security of the Protestant succession? The periods from which the precedents that had been resorted to, in framing the present Bill, was drawn, had furnished much scope for declamation and invective; but the present Bill was in itself so wise and salutary a measure, and so absolutely necessary, that it needed not to be defended by former example. The arguments, and the sort of oratory resorted to on that point, had, nevertheless, not a little surprised him. Reprobated as the first years of the reign of Charles the Second had been, he would venture to pronounce them good times. Let their Lordships recollect who was the minister at the era alluded to? It was the Earl of Clarendon, a man of as much ability, as perfect knowledge of the constitution, and as great a love for it as any minister has ever evinced. Lord Clarendon brought in the Bill, that was passed into a law, in the 13th of Charles the Second, from which the present Bill was copied; and the legislature of that day adopted it, as a wise, a necessary, and a safe measure. Lord Clarendon could not be charged with a wish to infringe the constitution, and break in upon the liberties of Englishmen; his whole political life was a proof of the contrary, and exhibited a model worthy the imitation of every minister; so much so, that his lordship said, he believed the Earl of Clarendon's zeal and attachment to the constitution were the means of his fall. It was not his intention, he declared to attempt to follow the noble Earl through the

wide field of extraneous matter into which he had deviated; but it was he avowed, a matter of extreme surprize to him, to hear the noble Earl so roundly assert, that the war had been one continued series of disaster and disgrace. Had the noble Earl turned his eyes for a single moment where he looked then, (at Earl Howe) he must have recollected that his assertion was rash and unfounded altogether: He must have felt himself compelled to acknowledge that glorious success had been obtained; successes which in point of personal skill, bravery and conduct in the commander, as well as in respect of national honour and importance, had not been surpassed in any period of our history. Captivating as this theme was to him, and dear as it must be to every Englishman his lordship said, he would pursue it no further. The bare mention of it was sufficient to raise a proud and grateful feeling, and leave a lasting impression on the mind of every man who heard him.

With regard to the ground of the first clause of the Bill, the outrage on the person of his Majesty he believed there was but one sentiment; it was deeply lamented by all, and the necessity of an adequate means of protection and security in future almost universally admitted, because if the King could not meet his Parliament in safety, the Constitution was in eminent danger. The noble Earl had argued, that the law of treasons was sufficiently adapted to every possible case that might occur; it was strange indeed, that such a position should be advanced, and with great pertinacity insisted on, when experience had repeatedly shewn, that the statute of Edward III. might easily be evaded. The statute of Queen Elizabeth, it had already been mentioned by the noble Duke, was cited for by her situation, and it was to be observed, that its provisions were copied into the subsequent statute that passed in the reign of Queen Anne. Upon which act, a prisoner of the name of Matthews, had been tried, convicted and executed, for printing a pamphlet, entitled *Vox populi vox dei*. In the commencement of the reign of Charles II. they all knew, much of the leaven of republicanism remained. There were at that time also a description of men, called Fifth Monarchy men, who unlike the Republicans of the present day, did not wish to have any King, but were desirous of having a King of a particular description, those therefore, as well as the circumstances here mentioned, rendered extraordinary precautions for the safety of the person of the Sovereign necessary, and such, as the late outrage to his Majesty, called for as much precaution, as in either case had been evinced our ancestors.

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In speaking of the second clause, his Lordship observed, that much of the noble Earl's speech, had gone to prove, that the late detestable and atrocious attempt on the Sovereign, had no connection whatever with certain speeches, writings, and doctrines, advanced and distributed at certain well known popular assemblies, but the experience of all ages, proved the contagion arising from such meetings, and the dangerous effects that had resulted from them. How pure soever the intentions of those, who took the lead at such assemblies, might be, it was impossible to prevent the dangerous consequences that would follow. Although men of sense despised the gross and seditious doctrines, and libels boldly maintained and industriously circulated, those who conceived that their extreme folly and absurdity would be a sufficient cure to the evil, and that they ought to be treated only with a silent contempt, fell into a fatal mistake. When the cup was presented to the mixed and unthinking multitude, it was easy to conceal the poison it contained, and it was too late to apply an antidote, when the venom had reached the vitals. He therefore could not agree that seven years transportation, and that, not till after conviction of the second offence, was too severe a punishment for sedition; a crime of the most dangerous tendency. The most enormous crimes had been found to originate in the delusions, which the publication of insidious opinions, founded upon false political principles had held forth; when those villains, Ravallac and Chatelet, assassinated Henry the IVth of France, they severally confessed, that they had been prompted to the horrid deed by the doctrines they had heard; and the opinions they had imbibed in consequence. They had been told that the King was a tyrant, and that it was an act of the highest moral excellence to destroy a tyrant. This was sufficient to shew from ancient history, how dangerous it was to expose men of warm and enthusiastic minds, of weak understandings, to be worked upon by the inflammatory and artful discourses of orators, whose object was to introduce confusion, if not to subvert the Constitution. Could any man imagine, that France, a country, where the manners of men were supposed to have received the highest polish of refinement, where learning and arts, had nearly attained the utmost pitch of improvement; could any man suppose that in such a country, such a change could have happened, as had taken place within these few years, and that they could have at once plunged from the most elevated point of civilization and urbanity, into a state of the most savage ferocity, and

the grossest barbarism, happily unparalleled in modern times, and almost unequalled in ancient history.

To what was this unfortunate and astonishing change to be attributed, but to the unrestrained circulation of writings, the object of which was to turn into ridicule and derision every thing serious, every thing held sacred; to destroy bonds by which men in civil society were held together. This had led to irreligion and made atheism fashionable, which had at length overthrown all humanity, all order, all morality. To this cause, and to this alone, were the mischiefs that had ensued, all the bloodshed that had deluged France to be ascribed. From this corrupted source flowed all the waters of bitterness, which had spread desolation and ruin, wherever they flowed. It had been said again and again in that House, that jacobin principles wore a bugbear which ministers found it convenient to hold out to their Lordships. Be that as it might, if it were censurable to be an alarmist, he would arrogate to himself the pride of having merited this censure in the highest degree. He owned he dreaded the diffusion of French principles in this country, much more than the devastation of the most cruel pestilence. Because the experience of all the evils and calamities that had made France a scene of distress and ruin were to be attributed to their pernicious influence.

—Hac fonte derivatur clades.

Among other objections to the second clause, the noble Lord had found fault with the word "Constitution," and said, that no man could define its meaning. He was of a very different opinion; who was there that knew any thing of the constituent parts and general whole of the government of Great Britain, who did not perfectly comprehend what was meant to be expressed and imported when the constitution of the country was mentioned? He thought the word introduced in the Bill was highly proper and parliamentary. The Bill had been said to be a libel on the loyalty of the people of England. He had too good an opinion of every noble lord present to suspect or believe that there was any wish or intention to excite a dangerous fervour and jealousy in the minds of the people; but he was sorry to say, that the light, in which the noble Earl had thought proper to represent the operation of the clause, might have a mischievous tendency. No man could entertain a higher opinion than he did of the good sense and loyalty of Englishmen; he well knew they had long been accustomed to hold the constitution of their country

country in the utmost veneration, and to prize the blessings it produced as inestimable; he hoped this sentiment had not been weakened by the comparisons they had lately been enabled to make; but that there were some persons in the country whose aim and object were to undermine the constitution, and subvert the government, he conceived, no man who had witnessed the events, that had occurred, only in the last three years, could doubt for a single moment. Their Lordships would recollect that they had upon their table abundant documents to prove what had been the conduct of certain societies openly and avowedly held. It could not be forgotten that they had sent an address to the French Convention, full of congratulations on the success of their proceedings; nor could it have escaped their Lordships recollection, what the answer was that the President made. It was, that he hoped soon to have it in their power to send an address to the National Convention of Great Britain. By the timely care and exertion of the legislature these societies had been checked; they were now again rising into notice, and if not resisted might produce most serious consequences. Let not their Lordships therefore be lulled into a false security by the fascinating charms of the syren eloquence of the noble Earl, but consider the nature of the case as it really stood, and decide for themselves. They would not, he was persuaded, be wanting in their endeavours to maintain the constitution entire, and cordially unite in providing proper means for protecting the person of their monarch. Were they to fail in either respect, they would be responsible for consequences, and would by their inattention hazard the destruction of both. He need not mention the personal interest that they all had in the safety of their Sovereign, a Sovereign, whose many virtues his situation gave him a daily opportunity of witnessing; and the fortitude of whose mind enabling him to bear the many causes of anxiety and pain, from which even persons of his exalted rank were not exempt, with calm resignation, but perfect firmness, could not be sufficiently admired.

The noble Earl, his Lordship remarked, among other topics of past debate had alluded to the decision of the Court of Judiciary in a distant part of the kingdom, in a case of what was then termed *seditio regni*; he did not mean to discuss the point again, but when that subject was under debate, he had fully declared his opinion that the judges of Scotland had governed themselves by what was there, the law of the land, and had done no more than exercise a discretion which

which the law called upon them to exercise. In that opinion every lawyer and every man who knew any thing of the law of the country concurred, with the exception of the noble Earl, who had he pursued the practice of a profession to which early in life he had paid attention, would doubtless have proved one of its brightest ornaments. With regard to the effect of the clause on Scotch Peers, he saw no necessity for alteration. It left the Peers of Scotland and every man of that country precisely where it found them, and did not deprive them of any of their privileges.

His Lordship glanced at one or two other matters, and at length concluded a most masterly speech with declaring that the Bill would have his most hearty support.

The *Earl of Lauderdale* rose to explain. It had he said been far from his intention to manifest any thing like disrespect to the personal merit and behaviour of any of our brave officers, who had so eminently distinguished themselves during the war, least of all to the noble Earl present, whose gallant conduct, and singular skill in his profession was so eminently displayed on the first of June, 1794, no man had been more ready to acknowledge in the noble Earl's absence than himself. He had then said that the merit of the noble Earl was the greater in proportion to the glaring neglect and misconduct of ministers, who had suffered him to meet the fleet of France with an inferior force. That circumstance alone was sufficient to prove at once the incapacity of ministers and their gross neglect of duty, and to entitle the noble Earl to the unceasing gratitude of his countrymen.

Lord Grenville said, that the manner in which the noble Lord, and especially the noble Earl who opposed this Bill, had conducted the debate, had left him but very little to trouble their Lordships with. The noble Lord, who had spoken last but not least, was much mistaken, if he supposed that he wished him either to lower his tone, or to alter his arguments; so far from it, he solemnly declared, that if the noble Lord would have condescended to have asked him what arguments he should use, he would have suggested to him those very arguments he had advanced, because he wished to shew the House—he wished to shew the country, what were the principles of those who opposed the Bill; and who it was, that avowedly stood forth the advocate and defender of the conduct of the London Corresponding Society. Their Lordships had heard the noble Lord say, that if this Bill was passed into a law, not duty, not principle, but *prudence* alone would keep him from resisting it with open force. Upon this expression he would make no comment. The noble Lord had endeavoured

endeavoured to explain away a part of his speech, which he conceived to contain very unjustifiable reflections upon the conduct of every one of our commanders who had distinguished himself by his skill and bravery in the course of the war, by saying, that the blame lay wholly with administration. He had adverted to the victory obtained with such honour to himself, and such eminent advantage and glory to his country, by a noble Earl (Lord Howe), and had stated, that he should not have been sent to meet the enemy with an inferior fleet. With respect to the gallantry and professional skill of that noble Lord, as it was above all possibility of censure, so it was unnecessary, and would indeed be an insult in him to say any thing in vindication of them; he would only remark upon that subject, that though, as to numbers, the two fleets were nearly, if not quite equal, but certainly superior on our part in the skill of the officers, superior in the bravery and discipline of the seamen, and infinitely superior in the condition and equipment of the ships. A finer and a better fitted fleet in all respects, never had sailed from any port of this country. The noble Earl's speech had he said, been chiefly composed of loose declamation and random invective, but amidst the mass of virulent remark and irrelevant matter, two or three arguments were to be met with, that required some answer. He would therefore proceed to say something upon those arguments which the noble Lord had used—he spoke on the outside when he said two or three, for the greater part of his speech was too vague to admit of reply, or too violent to deserve a temperate answer, particularly the noble Earl's declaration that he spoke from a sense of duty, when he said acts of Parliament and the law of the land ought to be resisted, and that nothing but prudence restrained such resistance, language which if it had been spoken in another place, would have subjected the noble Lord to the severest penalty of the law.—

The *Earl of Lauderdale* rose to speak to order. He charged the noble Secretary of State with having, contrary to every usage of Parliament, endeavoured first to misrepresent an argument perfectly in order, and thence to hold out an insinuation to the public, which he could not submit to. He had not recommended resisting acts of Parliament or existing laws of the land, but his words had been, that there were laws that a sense of duty would prompt him to resist did not prudence restrain him, and when he said so, he had guarded himself against misconception on account of the consequences that an unqualified assertion that resistance to the laws was justifiable, might have produced. When he had first heard the noble Lord allude to his words, with so much departure from the words

words themselves, he had suffered him to proceed, meaning to rise to explain when the noble Lord concluded; but perceiving him inclined to comment further on his misrepresentation, he had thought it absolutely necessary to call him to order, that he might once more put him in possession of the words, such as they actually were.

Lord Grenville said, the noble Lord's explanation had left the case just as it stood; and he would still assert, that if the same words had been used out of doors, the person using them would be subject to the severest penalty of the law.

Lord Thurlow said, he had always understood it to be the undeniable privilege of every member of Parliament to use any argument he thought most likely to prevail against a Bill under discussion, and before it passed into a law, and that it was held to be perfectly justifiable to state the probable consequences of any measure, and that to any extent in order to persuade either House of which he should chance to be a member, not to adopt it, and with a view to urge its inexpediency. With respect to the doctrine of resistance, it was stated by abstract writers, that there was a point of oppression and tyranny, at which opposition became a moral duty, because opposition to tyranny must be morally right. What that point was, it was difficult to say, but it must be an extreme one and such as bore no resemblance to the present times. He conceived it however to be extremely ~~idle and~~ improper to enter into discussions upon such abstract questions, when there was nothing in the case that called for them, and even to hint that resistance to the laws could be justifiable; as often as he heard such a mode of argument resorted to, he had been sorry, for it might do mischief and answer no good purpose; it lay however in the discretion of every member to adopt it or not as he thought proper.

Lord Grenville said, the correction of the noble and learned Lord would have been very proper, if he had not himself substantially stated the same doctrine. But as the subject seemed unpleasant to the House, he would not press it farther, only begging their Lordships to retain in their memory the sentiments and language they had heard. [Here there was an almost universal cry of *hear! hear!*]

Lord Grenville having repeated his expression, [which he constantly does, when there is a cry of *hear! hear!*]

The noble Lord had asked, upon what evidence this measure was founded? Upon what evidence! Had not their Lordships abundant evidence before them of the intentions of a large body of men to take every step in their power? and had they not evidence of the late attempts upon his Majesty's Royal Person? But the noble Lord seemed
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fore about the London Corresponding Society, although it had never been mentioned. It was argued, that there was no proof that the late attempt upon his Majesty was in concert with, or directed by, any members of that society; if he could prove that it was by their desire or concurrence, he would not have recourse to a legislative provision, he would have advised measures of a different nature, and resorted immediately to courts of justice for such remedy as the law had provided. With regard to the pamphlet which the noble earl had quoted, there the noble earl had the advantage of him, for he had never seen the pamphlet, nor did he know to what publication or author the noble earl had referred.

Another observation on this Bill was, that it contained a clause for preserving to the members of that house the free privilege of speech. For himself, he wished to state expressly, that he saw no necessity for that provision, because he was sure there was not a man of common sense who read the Bill, who could for a moment suppose, that after this Bill had passed, members of both houses would not have the same privilege of speaking that they had before; and the only reason why it was inserted was, that it stood a part of the former Bill. The noble earl had thought proper to make many severe observations on the times in which the precedent for the Bill was taken. He meant a general declamation upon the reigns of the Stuarts, it was unnecessary to attempt a reply; but he would venture to assert, that the reigns from which the precedents for these Bills were taken, produced ministers as able, as upright, and as much attached to the constitution, as any other period of the history of this country. He would instance one, Lord Chancellor Clarendon, a man, to whose love of the constitution it was owing that our laws now in existence; a man, to whom (notwithstanding his faults to which all mankind are liable) any minister might feel himself proud to be compared. But it was not alone to these times, he referred for precedents; let their Lordships look back for centuries past, and they would find that in almost every one of them, with very few exceptions, indeed, alterations in the laws of treason, had been called for by the existing circumstances of the times; the reigns of King William and Queen Anne afforded authorities for restrictions of this nature, when called for by necessity. The noble Lords who were so violent in their opposition to the Bill, had asserted that it would prevent the people from assembling to complain of grievances and petition Parliament for their redress; that assertion he utterly denied; the Bill declared

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declared nothing to be illegal, but what was so before, and surely no man would say, that any meeting was legal which was assembled or convened for an illegal purpose. The noble Lord had contended that the Bill was not calculated to protect the person of the sovereign, but this arose from the noble Lord not reading the preamble: it was meant as an additional safeguard to the King, and therefore an additional bulwark to the constitution. Upon these grounds, he trusted that their Lordships would assent to a measure strongly called for by the occasion, and which their duty to their Sovereign and their country demanded.

The *Earl of Lauderdale* rose once more to explain, and charged the noble Secretary of State with having misrepresented his argument, for the sake of conveying to the public an idea, that he wished to encourage them to resist the laws; whereas he had expressly barred himself from being so understood. With regard to the London Corresponding Society, it was perfectly indifferent to him, whether the noble Lord thought proper to consider him as their advocate and defender or not. He knew but little of that society; but what he did know of them was not to their discredit. Many things he had heard imputed to them that night were new to him, and, he believed them to be suggestions wholly unfounded; but, if he must couple that society and his Majesty's cabinet, he would not hesitate to give the preference to the London Corresponding Society.

The *Duke of Norfolk* observed, that the doctrine of resistance was a principle inherent in the constitution, and it was to the exercise of that principle that the family of Brunswick owed their elevation to the throne. In every limited monarchy the right of resistance must necessarily exist; indeed, the very words *Limited Monarchy* proved it. To define the point at which the right begin to be exercised, was to discuss it without fit and urgent occasion, and, he said, appeared to him highly improper. With regard to the present Bill, he said, he thought their Lordships had heard at their bar, on the first of the session, certainly proved, beyond contradiction, that a most daring outrage had been committed upon his Majesty on the first day of the session, in his passage to Parliament; every one of their Lordships, therefore, while they could not but sincerely regret, that so scandalous and indecent an irreverence to the sovereign, and disregard and violation of the laws, should have been committed, would heartily concur in taking immediate measures to mark their indignation at what had happened, and effectually to protect the

the person of his Majesty from the possibility of such a circumstance again arising, because it was of the highest importance, that his Majesty should not be disturbed in the discharge of so important a duty as his coming to Parliament, nor indeed in the exercise of any other of his royal functions. If the Statute of Edward the Third had not sufficiently provided against such an event, because possibly it had not been in the contemplation of the Legislature of those times, that an act of so atrocious a nature was likely to take place, the measure was necessary in that respect; and so far, the Duke said, it had his concurrence; but he could not say that, from any thing he had heard, he was reconciled to the rest of the Bill. When the attack upon his Majesty was coupled with the proceedings of certain societies, he could not see the chain of reasoning that connected the two together. No proof whatever of such connection had been adduced, and therefore he was not prepared to consent to the whole of the Bill; but if the noble secretary of state would give him any prospect of its being altered in the committee, so as to remove his objections, he would not oppose the second reading.

The *Earl of Abingdon* began a speech, very inaudibly heard, with mentioning the case of his friend Mr. Estwick, whom he described as having been extremely ill treated by a noble lord who presided in one of the courts of justice, declaring that he meant, at a proper opportunity, when his mind was tranquillized, to move, that the person to whom he alluded, should be taken into custody of their lordship's tipstaff, and sent as prisoner to the tower; and that an address be presented to his Majesty, praying his Majesty to remove that judge from his office, as wholly unfit to conduct the affairs of the court in which he presided.

Marquis Townsend said a word or two upon the irregularity of the noble Earl's introducing any matter, so foreign from the subject under the consideration of their Lordships; after which

The *Earl of Abingdon* went on and confined his argument to the Bill itself, to which he objected, as a violation of the constitution, and an unnecessary multiplication of the law of treasons. He said; any thing that the crown lawyers chose to bring into court, and charge as a treason, might, by the aid of logick, be made out to be a treason. Thus he could prove, that to meet for the purpose of obtaining a reform of Parliament was treasonable. He would put it syllogistically; to reform Parliament was to alter the constitution; to alter the constitution was high treason, ergo, to endeavour to ob-

tain a reform of Parliament was high treason. His Lordship gave a cursory character of whigs and tories, asserting that there were different degrees of each, the moderate and the high or violent, and that, in proportion to their degree, they were inclined to pull down, or build up and support, the constitution, to stretch the prerogatives of the crown, or support the liberties of the subject; he gave instances from our history in proof of this assertion, declared himself a moderate tory, wholly unconnected with party, and, as such, he said, he must vote against the Bill.

The *Duke of Leeds* said, he had read the Bill with attention, and it undoubtedly was a Bill of extreme delicacy and importance; it could not therefore be too carefully examined; in the committee it would doubtless undergo the necessary alteration. The respect he felt for the sacred person of his Majesty would induce him to let it go to a committee, where it might be so qualified as to adapt it to its object. He owned he did not see the distinction, which a noble friend of his, the noble Duke of (Norfolk) seemed to have in view, when he urged the necessity of supporting the royal authority, and affording his Majesty effectual protection in the discharge of so important a duty as his going to meet his Parliament, or in the exercise of any other of his royal functions. It appeared to him, his Grace said, impossible to divide the private person of the King from the public capacity of his Majesty. The sovereign being an integral part of the constitution, it was undoubtedly their duty to provide for his protection, in all situations and in all circumstances; as much when he took an airing in his private coach, or on horseback at Windsor, as when he was in the immediate exercise of the royal authority, in his way to Parliament in his state carriage; he was equally their sovereign, be he where he pleased, and could not be viewed at any time in any other light. When the Bill was in a committee, he should propose to omit the word *Government*, in the second clause, where it stood "the established Government and Constitution," as he thought it would be more clear and intelligible without it. The clause also relative to Members of Parliament, he thought had better be omitted. It struck him as conveying an insult to both Houses; but both these points might be adjusted in the committee, where he hoped the Bill would be examined and arranged, with all due deliberation and attention, and that their lordships would not, for a single moment, lose sight of the important object before them, but hold constantly in mind, that it was their duty to provide an effectual protection for the personal safety of
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of their Sovereign, without violating the rights and privileges of the people.

Marquis Townshend said, he saw nothing in the Bill to prevent county meetings assembling for the purpose of deliberating upon public measures, and expressing their opinions freely. If the Bill had contained any clause or words amounting to a restriction on such meetings, he would have been against it, but, standing as it did, he should give it his support.

The *Duke of Bedford* rose again, not, he said, to intrude a second time on their Lordships, but to observe that no satisfactory answers had been given to the strong arguments that had been urged against the Bill, but, on the contrary, to declare that he had been taken to misapprehend what had fallen from him and others, and to recede from his presentation. He had stated distinctly, that if any additional security could be given to his Majesty's person beyond what the existing laws conferred, the measure should have his most hearty support and approbation. The Bill, in his opinion, did not give his Majesty any additional security, while it affected the most valuable rights of Englishmen, and, therefore, he again declared, that he should think it his duty to give the Bill the most decided opposition in every legal way that it could be opposed, and that in every stage both in that House and out of it, if the Bill passed into a law, he must say, it amounted to such an infringement of the constitution as no man could contemplate without horror.

The question was then put, and the House divided ;

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The Bill was ordered to be committed to-morrow.

THE MINORITY WERE

The Duke of Bedford,
The Earl of Lauderdale,
The Earl of Abingdon,
Lord Viscount Chesham,

The Earl of Derby,
The Earl of Essex,
Lord Viscount St. John
Proxy—Earl of Guilford.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

TUESDAY, November 10.

Mr *Hobart* brought up the report of the committee of supply on the annual duties of Land and Malt, which was agreed

agreed to, and a Bill ordered to be brought in upon the same.

The House then resolved itself into a committee of the whole House to consider an act for the importation of certain sorts of silk captured from the enemy by neutral vessels, when, after a short conversation between Mr. Rose, General Smith, and Sir John Sinclair, it was ordered to be reported, and Mr. Rose soon after brought in the Bill, which was read a first and second time, and will be read a third time to-morrow.

Mr. Rose brought up the accompts of the Customs and Excise, and the additional charges on the Public Debt, which were ordered to be printed.

VOTE OF THANKS TO ADMIRAL CORNWALLIS.

Mr. Dundas rose to move the thanks of the House to Admiral Cornwallis. He said, the ordinary practice of the House in voting thanks, was not to vote them but upon occasion of some signal and important victory. Finding, however, that this rule had been dispensed with in the other House, in the case of Admiral Cornwallis, and conceiving that no member present but would regret that the people at large should imagine that the Commons would, in such case, fall short of acknowledgment, he proposed to move them to that effect. With respect to the honourable admiral's conduct, there could be but one idea: The fleet opposed to him was double his number, notwithstanding which inequality, he not only offered the enemy battle, but compelled them to retreat, and on the whole of his conduct that day, had evinced a degree of judgment seldom shewn, and bravery not to be surpassed. He therefore moved, that the thanks of the House be given to Vice Admiral Cornwallis, for the skill, judgment, and determined bravery displayed by him, when in presence of a superior fleet of the enemy, on the 16th, 17th, and 18th days of June last.

Granted *Nem. Con.*

Mr. Dundas then moved the thanks of the House to the captains and other officers, which was granted *Nem. Con.*

He next moved a resolution, that the House highly approved and acknowledged the conduct of the seamen and marines, which was also granted *Nem. Con.*

Mr. Ryder brought up copies of the minutes of evidence given to the Select Corn Committee of the stock of 1794, and the produce of the harvest in 1795, together with the

the copy of his Majesty's order of council on the 29th of July, 1795, for the further importation of wheat, barley, rye, and other species of grain, which were ordered to lie on the table, and be printed for the use of the members.

The order of the day was then read, for the House to resolve itself into a committee upon the high price of corn, which, upon the motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was put off till Friday next.

Mr. *Hussey* said, that he had intended to bring forward a motion upon this subject, which, as the committee was put off, he should defer to Friday.

THE KING'S PROCLAMATIONS.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* moved the Order of the Day, for taking into consideration his Majesty's Proclamations of Oct. 31st, and Nov. 4th, 1795.

The same having been read, the *Chancellor of the Exchequer* rose, and said, the circumstances, upon which he meant to ground the proceedings of that night had made so deep an impression on the mind of every gentleman in that House, as well as on that of every man in the country, that it would not be necessary for him to make any comments on them. The publick had felt with becoming indignation, that a virtuous and beloved sovereign had been attacked in the most criminal and outrageous manner, and at a time too when he was in the exercise of the greatest and most important function of kingly capacity, when he was going to assemble the great council of the nation; that great, and indeed only resource against every national evil. The first impulses of every man's mind, after an attack so immediately directed against the life of the King of these realms, must be those of horror and detestation of the wicked, the diabolical wretches, who in contempt of the respect and reverence due to the sacred character of their sovereign—in contempt of the whole legislature, by a kind of concentrated malice, directed a blow at once at its three branches, in attempting to assassinate a mild and benignant monarch, who is the great cement and center of our glorious constitution. In contemplating this calamity, the House would feel that some correction must be given to the laws, at present in force against such crimes, means must be found to repress the spirit which gave birth to so daring an outrage, and to prevent such unprecedented consequences of sedition, and of sedition too leading to assassination by the most despicable, as well as the most dangerous of all modes

modes of attack, against the vital principles of the state, in the person of our sovereign.

If, under this first impression, every man should think himself called upon by the loyalty and allegiance he owed to the sovereign office, and affection to the person of the sovereign, by the reverence due to religion, by self-preservation itself, and the happiness of society at large, to apply a remedy to those very alarming symptoms, (which, he was sure, would be the case) another impression would arise out of it, equally forcible, and equally obvious, namely, that they would do this business but by halves, and act carelessly and ineffectually, if they directed their attention only to that separate act, and not to those very mischievous and formidable circumstances, which were connected with it, in point of principles, and which produced it, in point of fact.

In endeavouring to lead the attention of the House to the remedies, which appeared to him most likely to be efficient to this purpose, he would not advert to legal distinctions, but to prudential principles. If the House viewed the separate act with that eye of horror he conceived they must, and if, viewing it so, they felt the conviction, that a repetition of such enormities should be prevented immediately, the next point, that would impress itself on their minds, as arising from the two former, was, that they should adopt some means to prevent those seditious assemblies, which were as vehicles to faction and disloyalty, which fanned and kept alive the flame of disaffection, and filled the minds of the people with discontent. He had the most indubitable proof to support him in saying, that this sentiment pervaded not only that House, but all the kingdom; and that in no one instance which had ever occurred, were the Commons called upon more loudly by the wishes and prayers of an anxious community, than they were at this time by the whole people of England, to avert the ruin with which those assemblies menaced the country, by preventing their further proceedings. In full hopes that the House felt the force of these impressions as forcibly as he did, and would agree to some such measure as he had alluded to, his motion of that day would go to that object. It might, perhaps, occur to gentlemen, that a law should be previously made for the protection of his Majesty's person; but he informed them, that the other House had now under its consideration a Bill to that effect, which he hoped would soon be laid before them for their concurrence. His motion, therefore, was not directed to alter or enforce the laws of the King's safety, but to prevent those meetings,

meetings, to which all the mischiefs he had mentioned was attributable.

The meetings to which he alluded were, he said, of two descriptions; under the first of those descriptions, fell those meetings, which, under a pretext (to which they by no means adhered) of petitioning Parliament for rights, of which they affected to be deprived, agitated questions, and promulgated opinions, and insinuations, hostile to the existing government, and tending to bring it into disrepute with the people. The other description, though less numerous, not less public, nor less dangerous, were concerted evidently for the purpose of disseminating unjust grounds of jealousy, discontent, and false complaints against the Constitution, of irritating the minds of the people against their lawful governors, and of encouraging them to acts of even treason itself. Both these required some strong law to prevent them; for, if the aim of the Executive Government was not strengthened by such a law, they would be continued, if not to the utter ruin, certainly to the indelible disgrace, of the country.

As to the first of those descriptions, no one would venture to deny the right of the people to express their opinions on political men and measures, and to discuss and assert their right of petitioning all the branches of the legislature; nor was there any man who would be farther from encroaching on that right than he. It was undoubtedly a most valuable privilege, of which nothing should deprive them. But if a valuable and rightful privilege was made a pretext for acts destructive to the peace and happiness of the people, and subversive of the established government, it was the object of the people no less than of the throne to prevent the continuance of such an abuse.

This consideration, he confessed, occasioned considerable difficulty, but it did not create an insuperable dilemma; in applying the desired remedy, two things were to be looked to—the first, to correct the abuse of a sacred and invaluable privilege; the second, to preserve that privilege inviolate: caution, was therefore necessary, lest, on the one hand, they should encroach on the rights of the people or, on the other, suffer the abuse of those rights to become the instrument of their total extinction. This was a matter of great delicacy, and should be attended to in the detail; but the house would see, that at present the real question was, “did not the pressure of the moment call for *some* remedy?”

According to opinions which he had collected, as well as he had been able, from others, and such as he had formed

for himself, the great point wanted at this moment, was a more clear and defined power in the magistrate, to disperse, and put an end to all meetings likely to be productive of consequences such as were already mentioned. He by no means meant this power of dispersion to extend to Meetings professedly and obviously lawful, and held for legal and constitutional purposes; but that, in every case of a numerous meeting, of whatever nature, or under whatever colour, notice should be given, so as to enable the magistrate to keep a watchful eye over their proceedings—to recognize the power of the magistrate to be present at such meetings, and to enforce penalties on those who should obstruct him in doing so; and, on whatever pretext the meeting might be held, if it appeared to be of a kind that was likely to promote sedition against Government, to invest the magistrate with power to apprehend the persons on the spot—to make any obstruction to the magistrate, felony—and to make a provision, that if arresting should not be found sufficient to disperse the meeting, they should be dispersed in the same manner, and under the same penalties, as those contained in the Riot Act. The House would see, that this summary power in the magistrate, while it would still leave to the people the fair right to petition, on the one hand, would, on the other, prevent the abuse of it. This, he said, was the outline. All detail he would reserve for future discussion.

Under the other description of meetings, through which the minds of the people were poisoned, fell those of public lecturers, who made the dissemination of sedition the source of livelihood—to them he thought it would be proper to apply regulations, something like those that passed about fourteen years ago, in an act, which, from the learned Gentleman who brought it in, was called *Mansfield's act*, and by which all houses wherein meetings of an improper kind were held on a Sunday, were to be treated as *disorderly houses*. And, to avoid evasion, the clause should apply to every house wherein any people met, exceeding by a certain number to be stated in the act, the real family of the house. "So convinced am I (said he) that there can be but one feeling, and one opinion, that some measure of this kind is necessary; [here a cry of "*hear!*" from the opposite side], and so little am I shaken in that conviction by the adverse considerations of *hear! hear!* that I am sure I should but show a distrust of the cause, if I said any more—I will therefore only move, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill for the more effectually preventing seditious meetings and assemblies."

As soon as the Speaker read the motion,

Mr. Fox said, he trusted it was unnecessary for him to preface what he had to say, by a declaration which he hoped, for every member of that House, was equally unnecessary; that he felt as much horror at the attempt which was made against his Majesty as any man in this kingdom, quite as much as any man who might move, who might second, or who might support the Bill, which it seems was to be offered to the House. Having agreed so far with the minister that night, there he must take his leave of him. He did not think he should well express his feelings, if he declared that his indignation at what happened, even on that day, was more than equal to what he felt from what he had heard that night. The Right Hon. Gentleman had adverted to a Bill, at that time, in the other House, which was stated to have for its object the better security of his Majesty's person, and, on which, it was probable the House would have some communication with their Lordships. He believed it would be difficult for the Right Hon. Gentleman to shew the necessity for that Bill, if he meant to ground that necessity upon the assumption that what happened on the first day of the session was in consequence of what passed at meetings to which he had alluded. He disapproved highly of all these experiments, which were professed to be intended as securities for the enjoyment of all the blessings of our constitution. He knew the constitution had existed for ages sufficiently guarded by the law as it now stood, and therefore, if the Right Hon. Gentleman had not opened his plan, which, he declared, struck him with horror; if he had not said a single word upon that detestable plan, he should have given his negative to the proposition in question; because the proposition itself laid it down as an assumed fact, that the law at present is insufficient to prevent breaches of the public peace. It was said, there was a seditious meeting held somewhere in the neighbourhood of the metropolis a few days before the meeting of Parliament; that at such meeting very alarming proceedings had taken place, striking at the very existence of Parliament itself. That such proceedings took place he did not know; but, this he knew, if speeches were made that had such a tendency, the speakers were amenable to the law. If hand-bills were distributed that had such a tendency, the distributors were amenable to the law. If any person had so conducted himself as to be the means of causing the people so assembled to form a resolution, having such a tendency, he was amenable to the law, and, when proved guilty, was liable to adequate punishment. But this

Bill was to proceed upon the flimsy pretext, that all the violence and outrage that had been offered to his Majesty was the result of this meeting, of which there was not the colour of proof. He knew, indeed, that the Right Hon. Gentleman had attempted to connect them he knew too there had been, and would be, endeavours to confound the two things.

It was, he said, ridiculous to talk of these things being perfectly notorious; that these proceedings were clearly seditious; they were points upon which that House could not regularly proceed, for they were points on which there was no proof. Nothing was more clear than that the House of Commons ought never to proceed upon any measure that might trespass upon the rights of the public, without evidence that was clear and decisive, even in cases of extreme necessity; but there was no evidence whatever to connect any of the proceedings of these meetings with the daring insult offered to his Majesty. The Right Hon. Gentleman had said, should not the House endeavour to prevent the repetition of such an insult? Undoubtedly it should. But then it should be upon evidence; and here the rights of persons meeting any where, to assent on public measures, was to be affected in consequence of what happened to his Majesty on the first day of the session, although there was no evidence to prove that the outrage arose from any proceedings that were had at any public meeting previous to that day. Some persons perhaps might consider the Proclamation itself as evidence; he could agree to no such rule: he well knew there were those who doubted the truth of the foundation of Proclamations; who believed many of them to be the acts of Ministers for certain purposes of their own, for the increase of power; and he was sure it was not regular in that House, it was not fair, to take things for granted because they appear in a Proclamation. There were strong objections to proceeding upon this subject without better evidence. All this, however, was trifling in comparison with what the Right Hon. Gentleman had said upon the subject. He had said, there might be a difficulty to preserve the rights of petitioners, and to prevent abuses of that right. Difficulty and delicacy he confessed there were; but that did not embarrass him; for, he said, they might be settled in the detail. Thus the Right Hon. Gentleman talked with ease on the rights of the subject, as if he expected to bring the public to submit to the most rigid despotism. In that detail, Mr. Fox said, he should never take a share, for he would never attend the detail of a measure which in its essence was so detestable. The Right Hon. Gentleman had hinted at two points. With regard

regard to the first, that of public meetings, for the discussion of public subjects, he must not only confess them to be lawful, but he must allow them also to be agreeable to the very essence of the British constitution, and to which, under that constitution, most of the liberties we enjoy are particularly owing. The Right Hon. Gentleman had said, that these meetings were not to be prevented, they were only to be regulated. "Attend (said Mr. Fox) to the regulation. I thought I knew the rights of man—aye, and the rights of Englishmen. [Here was a prodigious cry of hear! hear!] What! said he, that is a slip, you suppose. The rights of man is a sentence without a meaning. Do you say that men have no natural rights? If so, Englishmen's rights can have no existence; nay, this house would have no existence. The rights of man, I say, are clear; man has natural rights; and, he who denies it is ignorant of the basis of a free government; he is ignorant of the best principle of ours, for these rights are naturally connected with the best parts of the history of our country."

The people, he had always thought, had a right to discuss the topics from which their grievances arose by themselves. In all instances, they had a right to complain by petition, and to remonstrate to either House of Parliament, or, if they pleased, to the king exclusively: but now, it seems, they are not to do so, unless notice be given to a magistrate, that he may become a witness of their proceedings. There were to be witnesses of every word that every man spoke. This magistrate, this jealous witness, was to form his own opinion on the propriety of the proceedings; and if he should think that any thing that was said had a tendency to sedition, he had power to arrest the man who uttered it. Not only so, he had power to dissolve the meeting at his own will. "Say at once, said Mr. Fox, that a free constitution is no longer suitable to us; say at once, in a manly manner, that, upon an ample review of the state of this world at this moment, a free constitution is not fit for you; conduct yourselves at once as the senators of Denmark did, lay down your freedom, and acknowledge and accept of despotism. But do not mock the understandings and the feelings of mankind, by telling the world that you are free—by telling me that, if out of the house, for the purpose of expressing my sense of the public administration of this country, of the calamities which this war has occasioned, I state a grievance by petition, or make any declaration of my sentiments, which I always had a right to do; but which if now I do, in a manner that may appear to a magistrate to be seditious,

seditions, I am to be subjected to penalties which hitherto were unknown to the laws of England. If in stating any of these things out of the house, a magistrate should be of opinion that I am irregular, he is to have the power to stop me: he may say—"The cause which you alledge for your grievance is unfounded; you excite, by what you say, jealousies and discontents that are unfounded;" and, if either to his judgment or to his wishes, I say what should be concealed, he is to have a power to stop me—nay, even to treat me as a rioter, if I don't obey him. I ask again, if this be called a meeting of free people?—Did ever a free people meet so?—Did ever a free state exist so?—Did any man ever hypothetically state the possibility of the existence of Freedom under such restrictions? Good God Almighty, sir! is it possible that the feelings of the people of this country should be thus insulted?—Is it possible to make the people of this country believe that this plan is any thing but a total annihilation of their liberty?"

The Right Hon. Gentleman had next adverted to a Bill which had been passed to prevent the assembling of persons for the discussion of questions on the Lord's day, from which he was to bring in a Bill to prevent the discussion of questions on any day; and this, he said, was to be applicable to all cases where money was to be taken. Why all questions were to be prohibited where money was to be taken, merely on an allegation that such questions MIGHT produce mischief, was, he confessed, beyond his skill to understand. But this was not all—it was to be applicable, it seemed, to places where no money was to be taken, because, in truth, persons might be admitted by means of tickets; and they must not amount to a number beyond a certain one which the Minister should be pleased to insert in his Bill, unless duly licensed by a magistrate. He would ask again—Was this, or was it not, TO PREVENT ALL POLITICAL DISCUSSION WHATEVER?

Let him ask whence arose this practice? Let them shew him when this had obtained since the revolution, or at any time when this country could be called a free one; and he would then confess they had indeed shewn him a rare singularity. The people are to be prevented from discussing public topics publicly; they are to be prevented from discussing them privately; if then, without this private intercourse, or public debate, the grievances of this country are to be felt, and are such as to call forth a general desire that they should be redressed; what are the public to do? They must send, it seems, to a magistrate, and under his good leave they are to be

be permitted to proceed, [Here there was a general cry of *No, No.*] "I do not mean, said Mr. Fox, to overstate this power, God knows there is no occasion for that, for there seems to be sufficient care taken of magisterial authority in every step of this proceeding.

"Behold the state of a free Englishman! Before he can discuss any topic which involves his liberty, he must send to a magistrate who is to attend the discussion. That magistrate cannot prevent such meeting. Good, sound law. He cannot, and he should not indeed prevent the meeting. But he can prevent the speaking, because he can alledge, that what is said tends to disturb the peace and tranquillity of this realm. Sir, I hope this Bill will never come into this House. I am not friendly to any thing that will produce violence. Those who know me will not impute to me any such desire; but I do hope, that this Bill will produce an alarm. That while we have the power of assembling, the people will assemble. That while they have the power, they will not surrender it, but come forward and do themselves justice; state their abhorrence of the principle of this proceeding; and those who do not, I here pronounce to be traitors to their country! If they neglect it, this peaceable means of obtaining redress to grievances will be all over. Good God, Sir, what madness, what frenzy has overtaken the authors of this measure! I will suppose for a moment that the only object which they have in view is the preventing a revolution in this country. But that they should have proceeded upon a plan which has no regard for the liberty of the people, no regard for the glorious efforts of our ancestors, no regard for their maxims, no esteem for the experience to be derived from a perusal of our history, no esteem for the principles and the conduct which has made us what we are, or rather, if this Bill be countenanced, what we were, is to me astonishing! For thus to proceed to suppress or to prevent popular tumults, appears to me to be the worst and the most desperate of frenzy. Good God, Sir! I have seen, and I have heard of revolutions in different states. What were they owing to? Were they owing to the freedom of popular opinions? Were they owing to the facility of popular meetings? No, Sir, they were owing to the reverse of these, and therefore I say, if we wish to avoid the danger of such revolutions, we should put ourselves in a state as different from them as possible. What are we now doing? Putting ourselves in a condition as nearly as we can to those when these revolutions happened; particularly to that which at this hour is most interelting to us, the reign of Charles I.

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We all know what then happened. Was that a time when freedom of debate at public meetings was too extensively allowed? Was freedom of speech then too much countenanced? Were libels then too often overlooked; or their authors insufficiently punished? Look at France. Who does not know what the government of that country was? And who will deny that if we pass this Bill, we shall too much resemble the state of that country previous to its revolution? What produced that revolution? Too much freedom of debate in popular assemblies? Too much facility of public meetings? No, Sir. It was their *Lettres de Cachet*, and other means which were made use of to prevent the public from manifesting their opinions on the affairs of government. We should therefore, to avoid a distress similar to theirs, avoid the cause that occasioned it. Sir, it has been the characteristic blessing of our constitution that it admitted of various ways in which the opinions of the public, nay, if you please, in which the ill opinions, the prejudices, and the ill humours of the body politic may have vent: and if their grievances be true, they may be redressed; if the allegation of them be false, the evil effects of their persisting in complaint may be prevented; but if you take away their hitherto well known and legal method of stating their disapprobation of the measures of government, you bring the best part of the constitution of this country upon a level with the most despotic; you bring the people of this country to the terrible situation of those who have no alternative between a total and abject submission to the tyrannical acts of government, and a remedy by violence and force of arms. You reduce them to that state in which the best cause will produce the greatest evils to support it, evils which it is hardly possible for the best cause to justify. Can there be a good reason for reducing the people of this country to this dreadful dilemma? If their complaints be unfounded, what can you have to fear. For the more vehemently and the more loudly they express their complaints, if they be groundless, the less effect they will ultimately have. But if you prevent discussion, if you stop up this vent for the humour of the body politic, there can be no alternative, as I said before, between abject submission and violent resistance. Sir, this system may last for a long or short time; but it must terminate either in a submission that will put an end at once to all the liberties of the people, or in actual open violence and fury: in either case the alternative is dreadful! and although I know that peace and quietness are great blessings, yet, as liberty is the only security for

for the enjoyment of them, I shall therefore trust that the public will adhere to the best principles of our constitution; and express their opinions freely upon this subject, not by the will of any magistrate, for that I know they will not follow, but as the cause may require. I have done my duty in stating my sentiments to this house. If this bill is to be brought in, I shall then have another duty to perform, which will be to move for a call of this house, because I think that I should betray my constituents and the public, if I did not call upon every member of this house to attend in his place to give his opinion by his vote, and to be responsible to his country for the part he takes on this most important and alarming subject.

Mr. Stanley said, if this Bill passed into a law we were upon the eve of a revolution. He was astonished that ministers should be so blind as to adopt such a measure. He predicted the worst effects to the country should the Bill unfortunately be carried into force as a law; opinion he compared, when controled, to a subterranean fire, which operates silently and bursts suddenly, with effects too fatal to be mitigated or resisted; men are not so blind, he said, if laws are properly administered, and their happiness even partially secured, to fly in the face of evil, and risque all the dangers and insecurity consequent to public disorder; an author of the first eminence, (Montesquieu) had asserted, that the surest proof of a country's verging on destruction is an enormous encrease of penal laws; that opinion he also professed himself to hold; and on that ground alone, if there were not numerous others more powerful, he should oppose the Bill. The existing laws were, he thought, every way sufficient to arm the magistrate with proper power for the suppression of all illegal meetings. Did ministers imagine they lived in the midst of people hostile to the constitution? What were the laws for the punishment of misdemeanors; were they not adequate? Why should laws, he asked, be brought in to authorize the magistrates attendance at public meetings? Do they not attend? can they not, as Englishmen, attend and discuss, and declare, their free opinions on any subjects propounded at any public meetings? Is it not their duty, not indeed as spies, or agents of corruption, but as free and liberal men, who go not with a view to construe all they hear into sedition, but to hear and be dispassionate. Mr. Stanley adverted to a Bill which Mr. Alderman Lushington intended to introduce into the city of London, and accused the worthy alderman of wishing to deprive his fellow citizens of the trial by jury. Mr. Stanley

considered the present Bill as a libel on the loyalty of Englishmen, and concluded with declaring his affection for that constitution which he had been taught from his earliest infancy to admire, and which he now feared was about to be subverted; a measure which would make him abhor the authors of it for the rest part of his life.

Sir *William Pulteney* said, it was the duty of every gentleman to consider how far the liberty of the constitution was infringed by such a Bill. The greatest jealousy, he admitted, ought to exist in the minds of the people at any infringement of their privileges: but gentlemen would do well to try, whether this consequence would attend the present measure, before they gave it a bad colour with the public, by declaiming against it as a surrender of the constitution. The Right Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Fox) had spoken warmly on the subject, but he was glad to hear him, as a measure of such importance ought to be adopted with the utmost caution. If a right measure, the sooner it was adopted the better, because the sooner it would prevent the evil from spreading. Sir William agreed with gentlemen that the measure would militate against liberty, if it prevented free discussion: but if such assemblies as those in question were suppressed, he begged to know, whether the liberty of the press would not continue to exist in all its force? That was a mode of discussing all popular and political topics, that he thought adequate to all the purposes of the community; and which he should be sorry to see surrendered. That alone was sufficient to maintain all the blessings of the people; and that could not exist in a republican form of government, in an absolute monarchy, or any sort of government which he knew, except a limited monarchy, such as we happily enjoyed. In such inflammatory assemblies as those in question, where sedition was copiously dealt out to the multitude, there ought to be something to save the public mind from imbibing the insidious poison. The great danger of such meetings was, that they only heard one side of a question, and their ignorance and want of information led them on to action, without considering what might be said on the other side; it was very fit, therefore, that they should be set right on such points.

As for his part, he saw no harm or injury to the state from passing such a measure as the present: but if, in the future stages of the Bill, it should be found hostile to the constitution and liberty of the subject, it might be exposed and be hindered from passing into a law. However, there could be no harm in considering the provisions of the Bill; and, if it should be found

found a prevention for the evil complained of, and disadvantage to the constitution, it could not, and it ought not, to be opposed. The regulations of policy and law ought to be suited to circumstances and times, at one time he observed a people might be too rash, as in the present instance; at another, too sluggish; it was then the business of legislators to apply their remedy to the occasion. A Right Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Fox) said, that such a measure never was resorted to in any free country, as empowered the magistrate to regulate popular assemblies: but he wished to set the Right Hon. Gentleman right. No assembly, no meeting of the people, could be held in America, with all its boasted liberty, without the presence of the magistrate. This, gentlemen would see, was very necessary; because, if a person who wished to speak against the question of such a meeting, dared to express his sentiments, he would be torn to pieces. It was then proper that a power be given to the magistrate to sit such assemblies to rights; if treasonable proceedings were the avowed intention of any bodies of men, treason ought not to be tamely suffered in this or any country. If the magistrate, he observed, exceeded his powers, no doubt the aggrieved party, by resorting to the court of King's-bench, would find ample redress, and able advocates, when such brilliant talents were exerted against the measure in question. There was no fear, in a country where every man was free to publish his sentiments and opinions, and where juries were the judges, whether any publication was a libel or not, that liberty would be surrendered: but then, if treason and sedition were assent, no one would deny, the current ought to be stopped; and if the laws already in force were found inadequate to effect this, it was equally clear and undeniable, that some regulation ought to be made to save every thing dear to Englishmen. He therefore should give his support to the Bill, because he thought it would prove a remedy to an evil, without intruding the rights and liberties of the subject.

Mr. N. B. Halhed said, Mr. Speaker, there are circumstances, under which no unwillingness of public speaking, no consciousness of slender abilities, will authorize a perseverance in taciturnity: when a town is besieged, the most peaceable inhabitant must occasionally handle the musquet, or line the battery. I am the last man who would wish to press myself forward on the notice of the House, or take an ostensible part in the business of the day. Educated in the most loyal principles of love for the constitution and respect for the crown, I have hitherto contented myself in the silent enjoyment of the

inestimable privileges of a free-born Englishman, and a warrantable hope that I should preserve them undiminished to my latest hour.

The continuance of those hopes, and of that enjoyment, is so inseparably linked with the question actually before the House, that I am persuaded our resolution of this day will, in one way or the other, decide upon them for ever. I have therefore applied myself with all the diligence I am capable of to the consideration of the subject of our present debate, and I hope Gentlemen will do me the justice to acknowledge, that, however deficient my capacity, there is not one member of this House who has better pretensions for impartiality at least of judgment in a complete separation from all party attachment, and a disavowal of all political connections whatever than myself. I differed indeed last Spring, and do still most decidedly differ with the majority of this House on the subject of the war: but there I stop. In no one instance have I formed new attachment, or forsaken my former private friendship, in consequence of this change of my opinions; and I am now ready, and I hope I shall ever preserve that readiness, to vote and to divide with either side of the House, on which reasonableness and justice shall appear to me to preponderate.

In order, sir, to form something of a clear and consistent opinion of the nature and circumstances of the business of this day, it will not be altogether nugatory to take into consideration, a distinct statement of the facts that have led to the measures now proposed.

On the 29th of October, his Majesty, coming in state to open the Parliament, was assaulted by some one or other, among a mixed and prodigious crowd, who threw a stone, which broke a window of the carriage; and certainly endangered the life of the Sovereign. There cannot be any man in the whole kingdom more ready than myself, to acknowledge the atrocity of this act, and to consign the author or abettors of it to the most rigorous punishment of the law. I was, therefore, exceedingly well satisfied, when I saw a proclamation, issued by the Privy Council, offering an immense, but not unfit reward, for the discovery of the offender. I was still more satisfied when, by a second proclamation from an office of police, I had reason to suppose, that this wretch, though not actually discovered, was at least accurately identified.

If it had been declared upon oath, that a dirty looking fellow, like an ostler, had been seen to throw a stone at the carriage, and that persons had been heard afterwards to com-
pliment

pliment him on his dexterity—Here one would think every thing that vigilance for the public weal, or concern for the life of the monarch could suggest, would have concentrated all its efforts. The discovery of a shabby officer, and a coachman out of place (however cautiously they may be concealed) will hardly appear of any considerable difficulty to any man who considers the present accuracy of intelligence, both in government offices, and in those of the police.—Nor can it be seriously a matter of doubt, but that if these people were discovered, their plot, if it were a plot, would necessarily be laid open and disconcerted; and their accomplices, if they had any, share the same fate with themselves. But at all events with this clue, leading to a knowledge of the whole state of the case, I put it now home to every gentleman's breast, whether it was not more reasonable, more natural, and more consonant to justice, to pursue that investigation upon the grounds of this information upon oath, than to turn shordly round into a totally new path of research, and shift the suspicion to a totally different quarter.

I must confess, therefore, Sir, that when I saw the third Proclamation, that which is now the object of our discussion, I was most exceedingly surpris'd and alarmed. For what is the coincidence of facts on which the circumstances alluded to are affirmed to assimilate—none upon earth that I can see, but a mere proximity of date. A riotous and starving mob insult his Majesty, and appear even to aim at his life on a certain day—a mob, evidently exasperated by personal sufferings of the severest nature, calling to the common Father of his people for peace and bread; and on the day before, a peaceable assembly of persons, who are not said or supposed to be in a state of actual necessity, and whose behaviour was in every respect most tranquil and exemplary, had convened to deliberate on the means of legally restoring their political rights.

There is not the slightest symptom of union either in the principles or objects of the two assemblies, or is it by the most distant hint insinuated that this dirty-looking officer or coachman out of place had been seen at the meeting near Copenhagen-house. But it may be said, this meeting was nevertheless dangerous, by instilling seditious or treasonable notions into the brains of an undistinguishing multitude, and so sideways, giving encouragement to the blow that was actually stricken. I ask, is there any proof of this? is there any ground for assuming it? Is it the first time such an assembly has been collected under the
orators

orators of this assembly, to have disseminated, as it is urged, such dangerous, doctrines totally unknown, or if known, have the existing laws been put in force to bring them to justice? Nothing of the kind. Other assemblies have been previously holden on the very same subject. The same orators, whose names are probably familiar to every member of this house, have broached the same sentiments at those meetings, and their speeches have been every where published and circulated, without a single animadversion from any of the law officers of the crown.

This, sir, appears at the first blush so singular a business, that I think it will not be amiss, if we analyze it up as far as we can go. We must then observe, that the grievance complained of by those against whom the present proclamation is immediately directed, are such as have been attributed to the want of a reform in parliament: they are such, as pressing with extraordinary weight on the bulk of the nation towards the close of a former most calamitous war, naturally connected the idea of returning peace with that of an improved representation of the country. And certain very able and distinguished characters of those days so clearly exhibited the connexion between the profitable abuses of war on the one hand, and the relaxed state of parliamentary independence on the other, that by vigour and perseverance they at length drove the war-ministry from their seats, and set up an administration of their own on the basis of peace and reform. Far be it from me to deny that they continued to feel in office the sentiments they had professed on coming into power, or to suspect that they did not deprecate that system of hostility, which had been found so convenient to the profusion of their predecessors.

But accidents will derange the best-concerted plans; and though they had the skill to evade actual warfare, they could not well avoid certain incidental armaments, which administered a momentary gloss to the languishing war establishment. At last, sir, the necessity of a real and complete war, with all its train of inevitable extravagance, and official emolument, was fairly presupposed—and then—then it was natural to look back with some anxiety at the circumstances under which their predecessors in office had retired, and themselves acceded to possession. I am but speaking the language of plain reason and ordinary common sense, when I assert, that if in one instance the plan for immediate peace and parliamentary reform had triumphed over an administration professing diametrically opposite principles—the same means might

might be apprehended, as again likely to produce similar effects; and therefore it may certainly be deemed no more than mere prudence and self-defence in those who were about to adopt the very measures they had formerly reprobated, to lay every possible impediment in the way of a similar attack upon themselves. Considering the matter in this point of view, I have no hesitation whatever in declaring, that the alarm so industriously spread in the latter end of 1792, against the different societies linked together for the purpose of procuring parliamentary reform, was perfectly wise, consistent, and natural. The method of calling out the militia at a most unusual season, of apprehending sundry persons, and seizing a voluminous mass of papers, with all the well-assumed trepidation of an immediate death-blow meditated against the constitution, was admirably well calculated to annihilate the most distant hopes of these societies in future, and commence a reign of terror which no succeeding opposition would have been able to shake. The means were ostensibly adequate to the end proposed; and the precipitation with which the act of Habeas Corpus was suspended, shewed the extreme eagerness of the parties to take advantage of the momentary paralysis of public opinion. What followed? After a long lapse of time, the persons originally confined, were brought to their trial, under such peculiar circumstances, of hardship, both as to the astonishing number of witnesses subpoenaed against them, and the unheard of phalanx of professional men, drawn up in array, at the bar, that, I think, hardly any thing similar can be found in the annals of mankind.

I say, and I am sure many Gentlemen who now hear me, can testify to my veracity, if they please, that even before trial these wretched victims were exultingly condemned to the gallows. That the assurance of their fate was in certain quarters perfectly proverbial; and I now declare my opinion as an honest and independent man, that if those persons had then suffered, not one of us now alive, should ever have seen the rights of Habeas Corpus restored to this country. Nothing would have been required to keep up a perpetual necessity for the suspension, but the sacrifice of a dozen or two of miserable wretches once in a year, to exaggerate suspicions of treason: a precedent would have been established (and who so fond of precedents as our courts of justice) for their condemnation, and in no very long period, popular prejudice might have gone hand and hand with the verdict. Thank God, the integrity of a jury impanelled in the metropolis, in the very vortex of ministerial influence, suddenly dispersed the tremendous

mendous cloud, and left nothing for ministers but the miserable shift of the possibility of an existing conspiracy without *conspirators*. By this time the projected war was in full effect, and any one who will be at the trouble to trace with accuracy the circumstances of which I have just sketched a rapid outline, will clearly discern from the very nature of the case, as well as the opportunity taken for this transaction, that it was planned for the very purpose of insuring to administration an undisturbed career in the prosecution of hostilities. I assume it as a matter of fact, which every man may verify if he pleases.

The failure of the project, therefore, as it was most exceedingly mortifying to its projectors, must be expected in the same degree to have given courage and exultation to its opponents; for which reason we ought then, to have perceived the immediate operation and effect in the conduct of the parties and their associates, of all those dangerous and destructive designs, of which they had been so loudly accused. *What was the fact?* Tranquillity in the extreme, a general submission to the laws, and a temporary suspension even of the most legal exertions of the societies for a Parliamentary Reform, in favour of the vigour and unanimity required for the conducting the war; accordingly this war went on and went on, like that former war, the opposition to which had been so advantageous to the conductors of the present. Calamities poured in upon calamities, expences were multiplied upon expences; all the flood-gates of profusion in subsidies, loans, and all the endless etceteras of ministerial dilapidation were thrown open, and it became again too apparent, that no remedy short of a Parliamentary Reform could possibly reach the enormous evil; and this brings us, Sir, to the moment of the Proclamation now on the table. We have seen that an attempt to produce a complete annihilation of the societies by an attack upon the lives of some of their prominent members had failed. It is necessary therefore, now to change the mode of proceeding, and by one blow to quash the very existence not only of all these existing societies, but even the possibility of any such society ever existing at all—and the time chosen for this operation is of itself sufficient, in my mind, to warrant the inference I now draw. The House will please to consider how very near we are supposed to be to a dissolution of Parliament, and upon that ground, pause a moment, to reflect in what situation every man will stand who shall not start as a ministerial candidate at the general election. Sir, upon this head, but to have dropped a hint is fully sufficient. I affirm that the present ministry, by a Bill
founded

Founded on this proclamation, will have the effectual controul over all the electors of Great Britain universally, and no man can possibly expect to be returned but on ministerial interest.

And now, sir, to come to the proclamation itself, for aught I can see, every one of its sentences is a mere assumption of fact without any proof whatever. Will the house admit upon this single authority, that inflammatory and seditious speeches have been delivered at the meeting alluded to, without any formal testimony adduced for it? Shall we without any evidence whatever conclude, that because it is notorious that one man in a tumultuous assembly has thrown a stone at the king's coach, many thousands of men who met quietly and decently the day before are complicated in the transaction? Are we not in full possession of an acknowledgment from the crown itself, that under an extreme pressure of distress, obedience to the laws, has been so general as to deserve its particular notice, and violated only in a few instances? Shall we not be permitted to ask why issue such a proclamation if it be insufficient, and if sufficient, why back it with an act of parliament? Shall we not call for a list of all those justices of the peace and others, to whom the proclamation is addressed, that we may judge for ourselves, whether or not they are now competent to the duty without farther aid? Shall we not, at all events, demand a call of the house, that on a case of such magnitude, in which the whole fabric of our constitution, as settled in 1668, is in danger. Every single member may be well apprised of the circumstances under which his own liberty and that of his constituents, of the whole nation, and of all their posterity, is to be done away for ever? Surely, sir, if ever there was a time when procrastination was a virtue, it is now: and as I have so long trespassed on the patience of the House, I shall sit down under the satisfactory conviction, that I have not in so critical a period shrunk from that duty which on less important occasions I should have been much better pleased to elude.

Mr. Maurice Robinson said, he had that night heard from an Honourable Baronet, a sophisticated explanation of the nature of the Bill, a circuitous effort to confound its object and effect, infinitely more insidious and to be alarmed at, than at the sort of pretext of necessity which the Right Honourable Chancellor of the Exchequer had boldly and undisguisedly alledged. From the sophistry of the Honourable Baronet, he collected that the people would have a right to read, but not to speak complaints against the burthens they endured. The interests of the sovereign were opposed to those of the

people, whereas he had always heard that the sovereign was the third branch of the legislature, and was bound to understand the democratical interests as much as his own. The Bill, they were told, went to impeach the loyalty of the people, who, except a few indeed, had constantly shewn their veneration for the sovereign; and he would assert, that never had king afforded more trying situations for the loyalty of the subject to be manifested in, nor experienced stronger instances of their love and attachment. Mr. Robinson said, he was not astonished at the want of manifestations to support the bold assertions of ministers. The Romans, he observed, felt no surprize when Caligula made his horse a consul, because his antecedent conduct would have justified any extreme of despotism, however absurd, but he did not pretend that his horse was a Roman senator. Mr. Robinson adverted to the nature of the proposed interference of the magistrates, deprecating it as an arbitrary measure. He also pointedly alluded to a member of that house, a magistrate of the City of London, who had proposed a Bill, the effect of which would be to abolish juries, or at least much diminish the benefit of trial by jury in the City of London. He concluded by an appeal to the honour and dignity of the representatives of the people, which ought to stimulate them to resist a Bill, which he could consider in no other light than as an execrable compound of oppression and folly.

Mr. Alderman Lushington said, notwithstanding the considerable part which an honourable gentleman had assigned to him in the subversion of the liberties of his country, and more particularly those of his fellow citizens, he rose thus early in the debate to say, that he should soon have an opportunity of bringing forward that Bill, to which the honourable member alluded, viz. the Bill for regulating the trial by jury; when the measure came to be debated, it would be ascertained whether the attack that had been made upon him respecting it, was warranted or not. When he considered the very bold and daring attack that had been made on the sacred person of his majesty, and the various possible mischiefs attendant on that event:—when he considered the bold and tumultuous meetings that had taken place both in the metropolis, and at no great distance from it, and that if the design on our most gracious sovereign was not there projected, it was certainly encouraged by these meetings: when he looked at that bold attack, not solely against the person of the king, but against the whole constitution, he thought the strong measures of the Right Honourable Gentleman necessary for the preservation

tion of the constitution. He was willing to give credit to his ancestors for having acted with due degree of wisdom, but he would not suffer that understanding, which the Almighty had given him as the guide of his conduct, to be locked up and fettered by what they had done. The Omnipotent had given him an understanding to be used and exercised, and it was the duty of every man to think for himself, and to act as he thought best for his own advantage. He thought the state of the country in the time of Charles I. and at present was totally different. If a negative was put on this Bill, he would venture to say, that not only every man in that House, but millions without the House, would feel in common with them, and would lament the day when they rejected this Bill, which was founded in wisdom; he would not say it would be applicable under any circumstances, but in the present state of the country, that he was perfectly certain when a new set of principles were afloat, which would overturn the government of Europe, if they were not restrained, if this Bill or some measure similar to it, was not adopted, the Right Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Fox), would not long have an opportunity of exercising his brilliant talents for the good of the country. This, many in that house, and millions of it were aware of.

The Alderman took notice of the expressions of Mr. Fox relative to the rights of man, and said, he had no doubt but the Right Honourable Gentleman was aware of the rights of social compact, indeed he was persuaded he could not in this enlightened moment mean to allude to the rights of nature in opposition to civilization and subordination. Before Mr. Lushington concluded, he observed that magistrates were called to exercise the authority of the state, where not merely political but constitutional subjects were discussed, and if they interposed that authority in an undue and unconstitutional manner, there were many able and willing to bring them to justice and assert the liberty of the people.

Mr. Curwen declared, he felt it his duty to express his sentiments on this occasion. No man more deprecated the idea of an attack upon the sovereign than he did; and he never contemplated any thing with more abhorrence than that attack, except the glaring attempt which was that evening made under the sanction of the royal name to deprive the subject of his last, best, and dearest privilege. If any thing could endanger the person of his Majesty it would in his judgment be that Bill. With the privilege of a free discussion on the defects of their government, the proceedings of

ministers, and the conduct of their representatives, the people of this realm were never obliged to recur to acts of violence to obtain a redress of their grievances, and hence arose the security of their sovereigns. It was true that the Right Honourable Gentleman had sufficient cause to suppress the voice of the people; for no man had ever suffered more mortifications from it than himself. What was it that put a stop to the Russian war? Not the majority of that house, but the voice of the people. What was it that put a stop to the Spanish armament? Not the majority of that house, but the voice of the people. To preserve this voice inviolate he would risk his life and property; and it was indifferent to him, if the Bill should pass, whether the constitution were destroyed by despotism, or an insurrection of the people. He could only attribute this Bill to the convenience of ministers, who wished to put a stop to the progress of complaints against them to the throne; and, as an argument in support of this assertion, requested that part of his majesty's speech to be read which spoke of the general moderation and good behaviour of the people: yet, after this had been pronounced by his majesty to both houses of parliament, they were called upon to vote for a Bill, which even in a limited and moderate extent no minister had before presumed to bring forward. He trusted the house would not—dared not let it pass; if they had the feelings of Englishmen, he was persuaded they would not, sure he was, that the country had only to be apprised of its danger, and it never would pass.

Mr. Wilberforce began by declaring, that the present period and occasion were such as rendered it the duty of every public man to declare his sentiments, and it was more especially incumbent on those, who like himself disclaimed the idea of party connexion. He had listened with attention to his Right Honourable Friend's opening, and although he certainly did not mean to pledge himself with regard to the particular provisions of the Bill which was about to be brought forward; he approved of the general principle of the measure, and so approving, he was not to be deterred from the frank avowal of his opinion by the lofty tones, and violent epithets of the Honourable Gentleman opposite to him.

He begged the house to take a fair and considerate review of all that had passed relative to the subject before them for the last three years: so long it was since attempts had been making by every species of art and industry to poison the minds of this country, to instil into them false jealousies and suspicions, and to excite a contempt for the British constitution

tion, and an attachment to those false principles of liberty which had produced such extensive mischiefs in a neighbouring country; nor was it only French politics which they were importing into this country, but, French philosophy also; in the numerous publications by which their opinions were disseminated, there was a marked contempt for every thing sacred, an avowed opposition to the religion, as well as to the constitution of Great Britain. Various means had been taken to put a stop to these proceedings, but in vain; these bad men seemed to redouble their efforts, and to press forward with increased audaciousness. Lectures were given, and harangues delivered of the most seditious and inflammatory nature; hand-bills and prints of the most atrocious description were circulated. That all this had not been without effect, was but too manifest from those daring insults on the person of his majesty, more and greater than had come under public discussion, which had excited such general indignation and abhorrence. What then was to be done. Were these men to be suffered to go on without disturbance? It was a question which deserved the rather to be asked, because there was manifestly a systematic principle, a consistency and uniformity in their measures, which plainly evinced a deliberate and digested plan of conduct. Were they to be permitted to pursue in all our great manufacturing towns, what they had begun in more than one of them, that same system of popular assemblies, and debating clubs, and seditious harangues which they had introduced into the capital. How could this end? who would venture to foretell the consequences? Surely it was high time for parliament to interfere, in order to stop the progress of this growing mischief; and he thought administration deserved the thanks of their country for making the attempt, in spite of all the clamour they must expect to raise amongst those who harbour these bad designs, and amongst others in that house, whom he had observed with sorrow to be but too ready to lend their countenance to them.

The measure of his Right Honourable Friend divided itself into two parts, that which respected the greater popular assemblies, and that which respected the smaller societies and clubs. With regard to the former, he conceived it was by no means meant to lay any restraint on the constitutional modes of discussing public questions, and stating, and obtaining redress for national grievances; all that was designed was, to prevent the mischiefs likely to result from tumultuous assemblies, and that surely in the most unexceptionable way, by bringing them more under the cognizance of the laws,
and

and putting the magistrate into a capacity of discharging that duty, in the execution of which, difficulties were now thrown in his way, which rendered the exercise of it almost impracticable. The grand constitutional organs by which the wisdom of their forefathers had provided for the discussion of political questions, and the expressing to parliament of the national will were to remain untouched; he might rather say, that they would acquire new life and vigour when those assemblies should be brought under regulation, which had encroached on their province and usurped their powers. He was ready however, to confess that it was not willingly that he resorted to this Bill; all that was left to him, was a choice of difficulties; it was the condition of human nature, and so where so true as in politics, that it was almost impossible to obtain any great good without the sacrifice of some opposite advantages, or the risk of possible evil, yet on the whole he must declare, that fairly estimating the advantages and disadvantages likely to result from the measure in question, he could not hesitate to which side of the alternative to give the preference.

The second part of the Bill respected the seditious clubs and debating societies, and this part of the case was to him still clearer than the other. Concerning these, he thought there could hardly be two opinions; they might do much harm, they could do no good. The cause of truth and of fair discussion were not promoted by these assemblies, on the contrary, they were the sure parents of falsehood, prejudice, and passion. But a Right Honourable Gentleman opposite to him, had defended them on the ground of their being necessary, as vents through which the humours of the body politic were to be suffered to pass without restraint: this was the very ground on which he wished to put to rest the question, and the rather because the very instances which the Right Honourable Gentleman had urged in behalf of his opinions, afforded additional confirmation to his own. Was it by seditious clubs and debating societies said the Right Honourable Gentleman, that the government of France had been destroyed? Was it by numerous clubs and debating societies that the monarchy was subverted in our own country in the time of Charles the First? Had not both Louis XVI. and Charles the First, attempted to stifle and suppress these and other means by which the public discontents were supposed to be excited. Mr. Wilberforce said, he had always considered it as the grand preservative of the British constitution that there was a popular assembly, the House of Commons, in which

which all popular grievances might be freely and safely discussed, to which the people might be encouraged without fear to bring their complaints, wherein they might be sure there would never be wanting those who would stand forth to assert the cause of the injured or oppressed; here in short all the national humour might be suffered to ferment without danger, he must therefore ask the Right Honourable Gentleman, Was there any thing of this kind in the constitution of France? Was it not actually for want of some such provision that the national discontents, long working secretly, burst forth at length like a torrent, with the greater violence from its having been so long repressed. Again, might not all Charles the First's subsequent misfortunes be traced to his discontinuance of parliaments for eleven years together, by which a similar effect had been produced in England. The application was obvious, and it was not necessary for him to take up any more of their time in enforcing a truth which would be disputed by none who understood the British constitution.

But the Right Hon. Gentleman had declared without reserve, that if the Bill should pass, there would be a *total* abrogation of all the liberties of the country. This was in part answered by an honourable Gentleman, who, opposing the Bill with equal violence, had declared that he hoped or believed, that if the Bill should pass the people would resist it. He was sure the Hon. Gentleman could not mean they would resist it by force; all he could design was, that the people, if it should pass, would universally exercise their just right of petitioning against it, and that the public voice, when expressed loudly, and unanimously, would procure its repeal. But when it was so confidently asserted, that, with those clubs and societies the national liberties would expire, he must ask, in his turn, where were the national liberties before those clubs and assemblies existed, which were but of late origin? But it had been urged, we were accusing the people of England in general of disaffection; nothing could be farther from the truth. Had this been actually the fact, we should now have been too late with our preventive remedy; but, in truth, this was the exact time to interfere, before the poison had generally diffused itself: but when there was a number of active and dangerous men who were endeavouring every where to diffuse this destructive venom.

On the whole, Mr. Wilberforce said, his judgment was decidedly in favour of the general measure. And he could most solemnly declare it, as his conscientious opinion, that

in voting for this measure, subject to such improvements as it would receive in the committee, he should invigorate the stamina of the British constitution. He saw the clamours that it would be endeavoured to excite, but he regarded them not. He considered himself not merely as asserting the cause of the monarchical or aristocratical part of the constitution, but that of the people of England, whose rights he was guarding, whose liberties he was preserving, whose happiness he was promoting, determined to use his utmost efforts that the constitution which, through the blessing of Providence, they had received from their forefathers, might be handed down unimpaired to their posterity.

Mr. Sheridan said, he had heard with more concern than surprise the approbation of the Honourable Gentleman to the motion of that evening. At one time he had been inclined to augur good from the persevering silence of the Right Honourable Gentleman, though he could scarcely reconcile it with his attachment to his Right Honourable Friend, and what was still dearer, the ties of official connection. He really thought, however, that the Right Honourable Gentleman who introduced the motion had been struck dumb with shame. Gentlemen might laugh at this idea, as it was very unusual for the Right Honourable Gentleman to be ashamed of any thing, but from the strong and irresistible arguments urged by his Right Honourable Friend, (Mr. Fox) against the nature and dangerous tendency of the Bill in question, he did hope that they would have produced something like contrition, and the abandonment of his project. He at least hoped that the Right Honourable Gentleman would be convinced that the measures he had resorted to were too strong for the necessity, and that he would have withdrawn his motion to consult upon some less irritating plan.

The Honourable Gentleman who spoke last, agreed to the measure, because he was desirous of handing down the liberties we enjoy unimpaired to posterity. He had unfortunately to remark that the Bill in question was one of the first to destroy those liberties, inasmuch as it makes a direct attack upon the fifth article of the Bill of Rights, which confirms the right of petitioning. He differed also with the Honourable Gentleman in his idea of a conspiracy, when he insinuated as an argument that the general spirit of disaffection had increased, was encreasing, and ought to be diminished. Did he mean to assert that it reigned more dangerously now than it did at the commencement of the war? If he did mean so, it was evident that the ministers put a direct falsehood into

into his Majesty's mouth, as he had expressed his satisfaction at our improved situation, part of which was attributed to the returning loyalty of his subjects. If they doubted this, why was there not a proposition for the further suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act? If they did not doubt it, then it was plain that they had been mistaken; that their coercive measures had failed, and that the spirit of disaffection was not quelled. An Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Jenkinson) had asserted at the opening of the session, that one blessed consequence arising from the prosecution of the war was, that it had eradicated French principles; it now appeared that this assertion was erroneous, and that after a year of famine, and another approaching, these principles were more and more extended.

The Honourable Gentleman had asked, what were our liberties before the formation of clubs, which he believed to be of novel existence? He would remind him, that since the revolution, clubs had always existed in a greater or less degree; and that the Honourable Gentleman himself had of late years belonged to almost every one of them; but unhappily there were such frequent instances of short memory in the Right Honourable Gentleman opposite, that he was not surprised to find his colleagues had caught the contagion. He asked the Honourable Gentleman, whether he had forgot that he was one of those persons who had formerly associated for a parliamentary reform? Whether he had forgot his associations in Yorkshire, and against that India Bill, which he now, with many other persons who formerly opposed it, as strenuously supported? Whether he forgot his association for the abolition of the slave trade, which he was sorry to say had not yet been carried into effect; and whether, without association, he should have been able to have done what he did?

He reminded an honourable magistrate (Mr. Alderman Lushington) who had declaimed against reformers, and protested against locking up his intellects in a strong box, in deference to his great grandfather, that he had also once been an advocate for Parliamentary Reform, and as he thought that at Copenhagen-house the attendance of a magistrate was essential, so Mr. Sheridan thought that the attendance of the Honourable Gentleman in future with the friends of the people which was a name he had probably an aversion to now, would be of very great advantage, as they should not only have the attendance of a very zealous reformer, but a magistrate in the same person, only they might wish to dispense with his bevy of confablers.

Another gentleman (Sir William Pulteney), had treated the subject with levity by observing, that in America it was usual for a magistrate to attend every public assembly, by way of letting the people know both sides of the question, and settling them to rights. Hence it was clear, that in England, his worship was not to be appointed to attend all public meetings so much as to take up the orators, as *to take up their argument*. According to this mode of reasoning, our liberties were to be preserved by consummate arguers and logical magistrates. He desired the house however to recollect what the magistrates are in Westminster; for instance, who are to be entrusted with this authority? They are not like the gentlemen of that house, of independent fortunes, and administering justice gratuitously on their own estates, but paid creatures, pensioners, and dependents on ministers. He recollected on a former day when the propriety of entrusting power to the discretion of such place-hunters was discussed, that the Right Honourable Secretary at War was a most violent opposer of throwing so much authority into the hands of venal dependents. Then what is to be done to render them fit for their offices? First you must give them independence, then integrity, and lastly talents, or they will never be able to discriminate. Let us consider also how they are to be attended. If any one of the orators in the heat of his argument should use a seditious word, or one which the magistrate construes to be so, if he should be tenacious, and not immediately desist when desired so to do, what is to be read, and followed by military execution. He remarked that reformers in general were not very ready to attend to a gentle hint, and here there was but one alternative, for if the magistrate did not find him passive and obedient, when sworn him to rights, he was to knock him down. The Honourable Baronet, as a remedy for any abuse in this authority, had stated that the magistrate was amenable to the laws, but surely he had not thought of the expence or inconvenience attending such a remedy, or he could not have mentioned it. To satisfy the members of the meeting too, if their intentions and behaviour were adjudged to be peaceable, and not to complain of ministers or their measures, they might call another meeting another day. Here was more trouble and inconvenience. Besides, how many magistrates were to be employed to disperse a large assembly? He supposed they were to be procured, as, to the great shame of this country, army surgeons had been, by advertisement, and we might shortly expect to read in the public papers, “Wanted an immense number of magistrates,

to prevent the dissemination of seditious doctrines, and set the people to rights."

"At this rate not a respectable and independent man in England would be found in the magistracy, but ashamed of having their names seen there, would resign the bench to a set of hired venal dependents.

With regard to the assault upon his majesty, he was totally ignorant of it on the evening it happened, and when he entered that house, had heard of nothing except some clamours. But he hoped he might yet speak freely, and he did then in his soul and conscience believe, that all the tumults had been raised by that immense army of spies, which had been disbanded. When they found that the Habeas Corpus act was no longer suspended, that no atrocious acts had been committed, that his majesty had expressed his satisfaction at the returning loyalty of the people, and that it had been declared in that house, that French principles were eradicated by the poor having no means of subsistence, and conscious that any violence on their part would not be ungrateful to ministers, so long as it furnished them with a handle to lop away the liberties of the country, it is but natural to suppose that they committed the outrage which they have industriously attributed to others. He concluded a most pointed speech by declaring he hoped the house would not suffer such a libel as this Bill to pass; for if it were to pass, he should think it unworthy to make use of that exclusive privilege which is allowed to the members of that house, to be the prattling representative of a dumb and enslaved people.

Mr. *Martin* said, this was not a time to make propositions of loyalty, upon which ministers so evidently practiced every day; no man could lament more than he did, the daring outrage that had been offered to majesty; and he revered the family on the throne. He believed in his conscience, that the Right Honourable Gentleman had taken advantage of what had happened, to rouse a spirit in the country to support the intolerable measures of government. He had long foreseen what was going forward, and there was no prospect of their getting out of their difficulties. Such a military force was established all over the country, that he feared much blood would be shed before the nation could regain its liberties, and defend the constitution. Every town in England was full of soldiers. In his return to London, it had been his custom, he said, to pass through Oxford, at which university he had received his education, as a place where he hoped to enjoy a little repose from the scenes of active life. But he of late heard

more drums, trumpets, and fifes there, than college bells. Many proud, pompous buildings in the country had been converted into barracks. He remembered the day when no member of that house would have dared to propose such a measure. He concluded with saying, that these were the few observations which occurred to him, and he mentioned them in the fulness of his heart.

The *Secretary of War* (Mr. Windham) said, he had heard much of assertion, that the liberties of this country were gone, and that the people were enslaved; but these assertions had been supported by very little reasoning. The Honourable Gentlemen, on the other side of the house, had long been too much in unison with the feelings and sentiments of the people who compose such meetings, and therefore it was not at all surprising that they should express the same feelings on this occasion. It was not, however, from such opinions, that the house was to form its ideas. No man could doubt but that a number of men in this country were engaged in designs to subvert the constitution. Certain gentlemen exulted at that circumstance. He wished them joy of that exultation, but he could not share it with them. He saw it with regret, and it was with regret that he attempted a remedy. If the law at present did not reach those societies, it was fit they should make a law for them. The principles adopted by those societies went directly to the destruction of the constitution. Whether certain doctrines had made a progress in the country, and whether they were attended with danger, or were likely to be so, was the issue between them, and on which he called for judgment. When in the feelings of every body the whole world had confessedly undergone great changes, the Honourable Gentlemen on the other side of the house, seemed to have forgot there was such a thing as the French Revolution, the greatest fabric, as had been represented, which human wisdom ever founded on human virtue. Look at the authors and supporters of this system itself, and every man must see they had the ambition to produce even a greater change in the world, than was produced by its conversion from Paganism to Christianity; or by the Saracens under Mahomet. The present leaders of France had annulled treaties in a thousand instances. They were not to be bound by the old musty maxims of Grotius and Puffendorf. They had endeavoured to exterminate all traces of ancient institutions, and had attempted to make the world adopt a new principle. **W**ere a country in Europe, safe from the poison of these principles, or which had not felt the effect of this great democracy.

mocracy. Where not the principles openly avowed in every country, and acted on by men of information and talents? It was evident there was a set of men in this country, who openly professed an attachment to the French Republic, who wished them success, and only waited for an opportunity to co-operate with them and join them. What was the case of Holland? Was it an entire conquest, and was there no French party in Holland? Was even America secure against the propagation of French principles? Did any man before the present moment hear of an unjust war against France? He desired the house to examine the French Revolution, and then to say whether that war was not just, which was undertaken against robbers and murderers, and those who were guilty of every crime that ever blackened human nature. To say that such a war was not just, was an outrage against the common sense of every man. There never had been a period in the history of this country when such opinions were entertained, and it was self-evident, that the progress of laws and of crimes must go hand in hand. When new offences occur, new laws must be enacted to meet them. The only question was, whether this remedy was to be applied, or whether those societies and their meetings were to be permitted to go on preaching sedition and treason as much as they pleased? They had circulated hand-bills and papers of a nature too scandalous to be stated. They mentioned directly the assassination of the sovereign, and this was followed in a few days by an actual attack on him: yet certain Honourable Gentlemen did not think this measure of safety advantageous to be adopted; and saw no connection between the language held at these meetings and that attack. No government that ever existed permitted such meetings; and as an *argumentum ad hominem*, the glorious system of new French liberty did not admit of them. The moment a man said any thing the least obnoxious to the government, they took a short method with him, and cut off his head. Mr. Windham made other ingenious and pertinent observations.

Mr. Grey, charged the Right Honourable Gentleman who spoke last, with having accused his honourable friends who opposed the motion, of bringing forward assertions only in support of their opposition, he therefore expected the Honourable Gentleman would on his part have produced arguments that might be thought of weight. How very great then was his astonishment, when instead of arguments, he found the Right Honourable Gentleman's speech was made up wholly of assertions. He was at all times happy to hear the

the Right Honourable Gentleman, who either did not possess the confidence, or was not acquainted with the crafty wiles of ministers. For this he was not sorry, as their inconsistency and absurdity of conduct appeared more clearly from the Right Honourable Gentleman's speeches. The decline and abjuration of violent democratic principles had on a former occasion been much dwelt on, as the happy effect of the war, yet at that moment, the prevalence of those very principles was made the ground of the Bill proposed by ministers. The Right Honourable Gentleman had rung the alarm bell so loudly and effectually in order to prevent the dissemination of those principles, that he had frightened himself out of all the principles which he formerly possessed. It was argued in favour of the motion, that the spirit of turbulence and discontent was increasing among the people of this country, and the Bill intended to be brought in by ministers was thought a necessary measure to secure the constitution from invasion. He was ready to allow that discontent, and that of a very alarming nature, prevailed in the nation, but could it, he asked, be attributed to the principles which had been so frequently held up to the publick detestation? Certainly not. If properly traced, it would be found to originate in the corruption and folly of ministers, who by plunging the country into an unjust war, produced calamities which they were unable to alleviate or redress. But taking leave of French principles, he would examine the outlines of the Bill, as stated by the minister. It was urged, that there were not only discontented men, but traitors in the country, who sought in the most daring manner to destroy the constitution. That there were such wretches he would readily admit, wretches of the most base and abominable kind, traitors, who strove, by the most atrocious means, to subvert the constitution; he would not name who those traitors were, nor in what situations they were placed, but he was convinced, that if suffered to proceed in their iniquitous plans, they would inevitably produce the dreadful effects which were so much affected to be apprehended from popular meetings and private clubs. Mr. Grey declared, he could not conceive any connection between the meeting at Copenhagen-house and the outrage which had been committed on his majesty's person; so far from it, he said, he would rather incur the imputation of acting with those men to whom ministers alluded, than suffer the motion made that night to pass without his most marked disapprobation; considering it as he did, as an attempt to rob the people of their dearest rights and enslave the nation.

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He declared he had not read the speeches which were delivered at Copenhagen-house; but since the Right Honourable Gentleman had alluded to the persons who were acquitted in the trials for sedition, he would take that opportunity to say, that he exulted in their acquittal, and considered that British liberty was, in that instance, by the constitutional exertions of a jury, rescued from the most flagitious and daring attack ever made on it. He believed ministers were deeply affected that they had not succeeded on that occasion; but it appeared from the present motion, that they intended to ensure their success on a future day. "Are not the laws, as they now stand," exclaimed Mr. Grey, "sufficient to prevent or suppress seditious meetings? What tumult occurred in consequence of the meeting at Copenhagen-house? Was not government fully enabled by the assistance of the civil and military power to quell any riot that might have happened? But the event of that assembly was, it would appear, not consonant to the expectation of ministers. The people assembled and dispersed in the most peaceable manner, and the speeches delivered there, of which such artful use is made, did not excite the least commotion. The supporters of the motion talked of their love for the constitution, and their desire to preserve, by so strange a measure as was that night proposed, the liberties of Englishmen. Such declarations he must consider as suspicious. He felt at the moment they praised themselves for their adherence to the purity of the constitution, that they meant to wound it in its most vital part. An Honourable Baronet (Sir William Pulteney) had observed, by way of palliating the evil proposed, that in this country the liberty of the press was preserved in its fullest extent. Ought we therefore to be deprived of the liberty of speech? It had been pressed as an argument, that government could not be supported by other means. If it could not be supported by other means, the question naturally arises, should it be supported at all? The best governments would occasionally excite discontent; and why should not a government disgraced by ministers, whose baseness and folly have degraded the country, whose foolish and ruinous system has universally propagated discontent and every where produced the severest reprobation of their measures, produce the same effect in a more eminent degree. The Right Honourable Gentleman who spoke last has observed, that a regular plan of attack was formed for subverting the constitution, and that the same manner of proceeding was adopted, that had caused the revolution in France. What, said Mr. Grey, is the system of defence,

defence, what are the tactics with which this attack is to be repelled? Ministers propose to crush the people, and must necessarily destroy the constitution, under the flimsy pretence of defending it; a dangerous plan, a plan unlikely to succeed, it being infinitely more probable that they will crush themselves. Mr. Grey concluded by observing, that he would on every occasion oppose so detestable a measure.

Mr. *Montague* acquitted ministers of inconsistency, and contended that the object of the meetings alluded to, was but too evidently to subvert the constitution.

Mr. *Buxton* said, 4 or 500 people had assembled in his neighbourhood, who, he was confident, had it not in idea to amend, but to overturn the constitution. To effect this was clearly the object of most of those popular meetings. He would therefore give his support to the Bill, but hoped it would be repealed when the necessity of the times would no longer justify it.

Mr. *Bouverie* said, he would vote for bringing in the Bill; but should oppose it in its future progress.

The House then divided on the Chancellor of the Exchequer's motion.

<i>Ayes</i>	-	-	214
<i>Nies</i>	-	-	42
			<hr/>
<i>Majority</i>	-		172

CALL OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. *Fox* with his usual energy urged a variety of reasons to prove the necessity of a call of the house previous of the ultimate decision of the house on a Bill of so much importance. He concluded with moving a call.

Mr. Secretary *Dundas* said, he would not oppose the call though, in general, he thought a call of the house either nugatory or harassing. In this particular instance, however, it might be proper, as he was willing to own, that unless it was obvious that this Bill had the concurrence of the majority of the people of England, it ought not to be passed into a law. That it would be found to have such concurrence he had no doubt, having been besieged in his office, for months past, with applications for such a Bill; and it was by the advice of a number of gentlemen, that ministers had at length brought it forward.

Mr. *Sheridan* hoped and trusted, that before the Bill, which would strike so fatal a blow at the freedom of Englishmen, was brought in, the voice of Liberty would be heard from

from every corner of the kingdom, deprecating an evil so ruinous in its consequences. Ministers, he observed, seemed desirous to shift from themselves the infamy of this measure, by saying, they had been advised to bring it forward many months sooner. He could safely charge them with the most glaring inconsistency, since in the first instance they declared the outrage committed on the person of the king to be the ground-work of the measure, and immediately afterwards admitted, that they had such a Bill in contemplation before the outrage took place. The attempt to conceal the authors of the Bill, was an acknowledgement, on their own parts, of the most dangerous tendency. They wished to make it doubtful from whence it came. He had no doubt but that, if time were given, the Honourable Gentleman would find the opinion of the public very pointedly expressed, and very loudly, against a Bill which struck at the foundation of British liberty. A Bill which was called for by no circumstances, except what he believed ministers called, the PROVIDENTIAL outrage on his Majesty.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer*, in answer to the charge of inconsistency, said, the late atrocious attack, perhaps, had expedited the Bill, and made the sentiment general, as to its immediate necessity; but many gentlemen of high authority had before considered it politic and expedient, and possibly it would have been produced if no such accident had happened. Where then was the inconsistency? But he thought a call of little avail when he looked round and saw so full an attendance. With regard to the call, he would only say, that he would not oppose it ultimately; but as gentlemen had said that the objection was to the principle, and not to the detail in the committee, the principle might as well be discussed on the third reading as at any other stage. He thought it would not be doing his duty if he admitted of any delay, and therefore he gave that notice, that the Bill would be produced in a day or two, that it would be read a first and second time, and go through the committee before the call.

Mr. Grey thought it would have been the highest aggravation of the injury when the people were to be deprived of their liberties by this odious measure, that they should not have the consolation of having the collective opinion of their representatives, but that it should be triumphantly carried through by a ministerial majority; that he trusted ministers would find the sense of the nation on this most detestable Bill, as pointedly declared as it ever was on any question. The Honourable Gentleman had more than once found that the

majority of that house did not speak the sense of the nation; on the Russian armament, the voice of the people loudly declared had saved the nation from a war, in which the majority of that house would have involved us. The Honourable Gentleman was at times for the majority of the house against the voice of the people—at others, for the voice of the people against the majority, as the one or the other would best suit his purpose. He now looked round to the present attendance, and said, there was no reason for a call. What was the attendance? not one half of the house. Surely the people of England had a right to expect that a Bill of such dreadful import should at least be discussed in a full house. He assured the honourable member, that he should oppose it in every legal way, both in that house and out of it; and that he hoped this last struggle for the rights of Englishmen would be made with firmness.

Mr. *Maurice Robinson* joined him in saying, that he hoped time would be given at least to utter the last bitter groans of expiring liberty.

Mr. *Fox* took notice of Mr. Pitt's assertion, that he should not think it necessary, on account of the call, to delay the stages of the Bill. Mr. Fox said, he hoped that more respect would be paid to the representatives of the people, than wantonly to hurry through a measure of this kind. If the call was important, it was that they might discuss the Bill in all its stages, and particularly in the stage usual for discussing the principle.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, the Right Hon. Gentleman, by hurrying the Bill through the committee before the call, did not treat the absent members fairly; they were left in the disagreeable dilemma of swallowing that most fatal poison to British liberty altogether; or entirely dissenting from the Bill. Many of the absent members, like himself, would, if they could not successfully oppose the pernicious principle of the Bill, try, if possible, to take out some of its sting, when it was in the committee; for his own part, he thought it necessary to declare, that he should not content himself with opposing the principle; he should oppose the Bill in every stage, in the committee as well as out of it; and in the detail as well as the principle.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he only meant that there was no occasion for delay; the call did not prevent gentlemen from attending before the third reading. The Bill would be ready to come into the house in a day or two, and then they might proceed as usual through the stages of it.

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The house then agreed to the motion for the call, which was settled for that day fortnight, and adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

WEDNESDAY, *November 11.*

The Order of the Day, for the house to resolve itself into a committee of the whole house, on the "Bill for the safety and preservation of his majesty's person and government, against treasonable and seditious practices and attempts," being moved, it was read accordingly, the Lord Chancellor thereupon left the woolsack, and Lord Walsingham took his seat at the table.

The preamble having been agreed to be postponed, their lordships proceeded to fill up the blanks and amend the clauses of the Bill.

Lord *Grenville* in conformity to his promise, moved to omit the words, "or malicious and advised speaking," which was agreed to.

The *Duke of Leeds* moved, to insert in the first clause, certain words of the statute of the 25th of Edward III. in order to render the charging of an overt act of treason in the indictment, and declaring it necessary for that act to be proved in evidence by two witnesses of the same condition with the person indicted, previous to conviction. This amendment gave rise to a discussion, between Lord *Thurlow*, the Lord Chancellor, and Lord Chief Justice *Kenyon*, in which the *Earl of Lauderdale* occasionally took part. In the course of it the history of the treason laws, with the practice of the courts under them, the various powers exercised at different periods by the Attorney General, from the reign of Richard II. down to that of Queen Anne, and still more recently was stated, explained, and animadverted upon, at considerable length. In support of their different arguments, a variety of cases, and precedents were cited from the law books, and other grave authorities; among others, Lord Coke, Lord Chief Justice Hale, Judge Keeling, and Mr. Justice Forster. The noble and learned lords differed strongly upon some few particular points; the Lord Chancellor, and the Lord Chief Justice agreeing completely in their view of the Bill, and of the application of the cases cited in illustration of the law of treason, and Lord *Thurlow* maintaining a different doctrine in some respects. Much of the argument turned on the question, how far it was requisite to express in the Bill that an overt act

should be charged in the indictment for high treason, and on the criminal extent of words? It was agreed on all hands that mere loose words did not constitute an overt act of treason, but that words coupled with an action corroborative of the design or menace to kill the king, expressed in such words, was an overt act of treason, and capable of being so charged in an indictment for compassing the death of the king.

Each of the noble lords spoke in terms of marked indignation, at the practice that at one time obtained in cases of prosecution for treason, where the Judge who was to try, and the Attorney General who was to prosecute, held a previous consultation in order to find out how they might most hamper the culprit, and deprive him of the advantage of fair and impartial trial.

The *Earl of Lauderdale*, pointed out a part of the clause preceding that, which the noble Duke and the learned lords had been speaking to, that in his mind, called for the insertion of some words of explanation. He wished to know, whether the kingdom of Corsica was to be considered as annexed to the crown of Great Britain, or as belonging to George the III^d. and his heirs and successors. He conceived, that if ministers came to negotiate with the French, as they had professed every inclination to do, formally acknowledging Corsica to be annexed to the crown of Great Britain, might be the means of retarding, or indeed might prove a bar to the return of peace; and yet it should appear by this Bill, as it now stood, that Corsica was formally annexed to the dominions of his majesty, by that part of the clause immediately before the committee, which makes it treasonable to depose the sovereign "from the style, honour, or kingly name, of the imperial crown of this realm, or any other of his majesty's dominions or countries." His wish was, in order to remove the possibility of any obstacle, such as he had described, standing in the way of a negotiation, to introduce a clause to except from the penalties of this part of the Bill, the attempts to depose his majesty from the kingdom of Corsica, or any of his dominions gained since the war. And made himself master of the precedents either immediately bearing upon, or carrying any analogy to the subject of the Bill under consideration.

Lord Grenville said, the words objected to by the noble Earl, were perfectly clear and intelligible, and that notwithstanding the noble Earl's ingenuity, in endeavouring to have it conceived that the present Bill, or any part of it, would bear

bear upon any negotiation for peace, that might take place, it would not have that effect in any possible case.

After some farther conversation, Lord Lauderdale waved his proposed amendment.

At length the *Duke of Leeds* withdrew his amendment, and the Lord Chancellor moved that the words "or other overt act, or deed," should be inserted after the words "any printing, writing," which was agreed to.

When the committee came to the second clause, the *Duke of Leeds* moved, that in the expression "established government and constitution of this realm," there should be omitted the words, "government and," meaning afterwards, his Grace said, to move to insert the words "consisting of King, Lords, and Commons," as he conceived, the constitution so defined, would perfectly answer the purpose of the Bill, and exclude the possibility of misconstruction.

Lord Grenville said, he was not aware that the word "government" was of so vague and indefinite a nature, as to render it likely to create doubts upon the meaning of the clause; if however, the noble Duke and the house were of that opinion, he saw at present no objection to the words suggested by the noble Duke.

The *Lord Chancellor* said, he was rather inclined to think, that the amendment of the noble Duke would tend to create that very confusion which it was intended to prevent. He, however, did not pretend to give a decided opinion upon the subject, but merely spoke from the first impression which the proposition had made upon his mind. If these words were inserted, it would be necessary, in framing an indictment upon this Bill, to introduce the very words of it, and to say, that such an act was done, or words spoken, with intent to destroy, &c. the constitution, consisting of King, Lords, and Commons.

If the law stood so, it would be easy to write a most atrocious libel with impunity from this Bill? For instance, he might write thus, "the constitution of England consists of King, Lords, and Commons, but I do not like an hereditary monarchy, it is an absurdity. I think an hereditary house of Lords still worse; and I think the Commons should be chosen in a very different manner; I would have an elective monarchy, and the dignity of Peerage should be granted only for life, or for a Session of Parliament." Here was an instance of a man admitting the constitution, as consisting of King, Lords, and Commons, and yet destroying the very foundation of the constitution. He only stated this as illustrative,

trative, a doubt that struck him upon the sudden, not having really had time to turn it in his mind sufficiently to decide upon it, he therefore wished the noble Duke would postpone his amendment, to enable their lordships to consider the effect of it.

Lord Thurlow said, it was difficult to define, with logical accuracy, the terms government and constitution. He reprobated with great severity, the attempt to vilify or degrade the person of his majesty, which he reckoned a subject too sacred for petulant and wanton attacks. With regard to the operation of the penal enactment in this clause, it was too severe in many cases to which it might be applied. He confessed he was not one of those who saw in the present times such cause for alarm as some did; he stated this for the sake of candour; he was ready to admit, that those who did really think there was danger, were justifiable in bringing forward restrictive measures. But the great and important point to be considered was, whether the enactments contained in this Bill were calculated to attain the desired end, and to prevent the circulation of trash, about which much had been said, but which did not cause so much alarm in his mind as it did in that of others. Was it a matter of such criminality as that to which he had alluded, to say that it was an abuse that 20 acres of land below Old Sarum Hill should send two representatives to Parliament? Yet this might be considered as tending to create a dislike of the established constitution, since under it such a case considered actually existed.

He was decidedly of opinion, that the present laws of the country were fully adequate to the punishment and restraint of the crimes which this clause was meant to embrace. He was one of those who admired the wisdom, and subscribed to the truth, of the preamble of Philip and Mary, that excessive punishments rather tended to increase than prevent crimes. His lordship then proceeded to put a variety of cases, in which he thought this clause liable to censure, but particularly that part which enacted seven years transportation, which he disapproved of entirely, as unnecessarily cruel and rigorous. It was not, he thought, from the want of proper laws that dangerous principles had been disseminated, and had assumed a threatening aspect, but because these laws had not been enforced by the executive power to remedy the evil, and to punish the offenders. New acts and severe penalties appeared to him but little calculated to attain the object proposed. Indeed, he was convinced in his own and his opinion was confirmed by the authority of the late book, that severe penal laws could never conduce to the

the safety of a prince, or to the preservation of any constitution. A jury would be inclined to acquit a person prosecuted under the penalties of this Bill, who was guilty of the facts in the indictment, rather than expose him to transportation to Botany-bay for seven years. It was by accommodating the severity of punishment to the magnitude of the offence, and by properly exercising the moderate penalties of the laws, in every case which occurred, that crimes were to be restrained. In adverting to the succeeding clause of the Bill, which places the power of prosecution at the discretion of a minister, his lordship observed, that though he would not believe or suspect that the present administration could convert to an improper use any authority with which they might be invested, there was much danger that in future it might be misapplied. The minister might choose to protect one culprit, while he launched the whole vengeance of the law upon another. He might even employ, for sinister purposes, creatures to commit trespasses under this Bill, from the punishment of which he might wish to shield them, or even in the case of a conviction, where he might prevent the punishment it inflicted. These he stated as matters in possibility. He was therefore against the whole clause, as it misapplied the punishment for a felony to a misdemeanor, and thus, at once set aside all distinction between crimes and punishments. As soon as his lordship had concluded his speech he left the house.

The *Lord Chancellor* said, that he was surprised at the opinion which the noble and learned Lord had expressed. Were any of their Lordships to learn that light and trivial offences were not the object of the Bill. The magnitude of the crimes against which this clause was directed, must be obvious to every noble Lord, who read or heard of the publications with which the press teemed, and which were distributed daily through the streets. In their consequences and utmost extent, they aimed at the subversion of every part of the constitution. They taught the people that royalty was an usurpation of their rights, and an aristocracy a nuisance to which they ought not to submit. They laboured to persuade them that they had no political existence, that they were slaves, and that they ought to assert their importance; and menaced the same evils which this country had once experienced, and of which a neighbouring nation afforded a distinct and a never to be forgotten example. Were such enormities, which aimed at the vitals of the constitution, too rigorously punished by the penalties of this Bill? Let their lordships

Lordships recollect also, that it was not for the first offence that this punishment could be inflicted; it was only after a man had braved the laws of his country, and had persisted to violate them, and after a moderate correction; it was only in such a case that he could be transported, and surely, for the repetition of such a crime, such a punishment was not too severe.

The *Duke of Leeds* here rose, and apologized for speaking of a clause which was not then before the house, he meant the clause for reserving to peers and members of the other house the privilege of speech, which he conceived to be an unnecessary provision, and proposed to omit that part of the clause when it came under consideration.

The *Earl of Mansfield* in a short, but most pointed speech, supported the opinion of the Lord Chancellor.

The *Earl of Lauderdale* said, that nothing he had heard had effaced the impression made on his mind by the excellent observations of his noble and learned friend (Lord Thurlow). Instead of meeting the arguments of his noble and learned friend, the noble Lord had painted in glowing colours the atrocious tendency of the publications in circulation, and had descanted with great eloquence, and with a judicious seasonableness upon the evils which such principles had produced in France, as if the learned Lord (Thurlow) had been insensible of the criminality of the conduct of such men, and indifferent to the effects it might produce. His noble and learned friend had demonstrated upon general principles, and upon the authority of the statute book, which he had strengthened by his own opinion, that the rigorous penalties in the Bill would counteract its intention, would be favourable to the cause it was meant to extinguish, and would defeat the views of justice. To none of these points had a satisfactory answer been given. He had intended to move, that this whole clause should be omitted; but at any rate, he wished, if it were to be retained, that it should be extended to Scotland, for did not the epithets of cruel and rigorous, which had been applied to the penalties it enacted, by his noble and learned friend, still reverberate in his ear, he would have called the provisions it contained mild and gentle, and mild they certainly were in comparison of the system of criminal law to which that country was now exposed.

Anticipating as his noble and learned friend had done, the provision which placed in the hands of ministers the power of prosecutions, he said that it was unnecessary to impute in imagination greater mischiefs to the present ministers than their conduct had in reality produced. It was easy to conceive

which that there might be men at the head of affairs in this country, who would be disposed to punish rigorously the person who attacked one branch of the constitution, while they would cherish the libeller of the other. Some one might represent the monarchy as independent of the Parliament. Such an offender might find his safety from the punishment of this Bill in the similarity of sentiments of the ministers, and might securely strike at the foundation of two parts of the constitution, while he proved his zeal and attachment to the throne. The different opinions of whig and tory might be the subject of support, or of proscription. A period might exist when, as in the present days, the principles which placed his majesty on the throne would be detected as the symptoms of disaffection, while the advocates of prerogative might find their abettors in the bosom of the cabinet. The Bill would, in short, put it in the power of any minister to punish only those attacks on the constitution, and even to persecute those doctrines which were obnoxious to themselves, and enable them to protect those opinions which, though agreeable to their own sentiment, were hostile to the principles of the constitution.

The *Bishop of Rochester* strenuously supported the clause, on every part of the Bill. His Lordship took notice of Lord Thurlow's allusion to the question that might arise upon the statement of the nature of election peculiar to the borough of Old Sarum, or any other place, and said, the particular discussion of the mode of election in any particular borough was, he took for granted, not intended, nor indeed in reason could it be comprehended within the purview of the clause. He conceived the Bill to be necessary, because any attack against either of the three branches of the legislature was equally dangerous and criminal, and if ministers did any thing that was wrong, they were responsible for what they did.

Lord Grenville replied to what had fallen from Lord Lauderdale and Lord Thurlow, and expressed a wish that the noble and learned Lord had not left the House immediately after having made such observations as they had just heard. His lordship in many terms declared, that he differed from the noble and learned lord in much of his argument, and assigned his reasons, which from the nature of them, he must in his own mind be aware, would call for a reply. He had many points to combat, which the noble and learned Lord had laid down, but he felt himself deprived of the opportunity of answering them in the manner that he wished to have done. With re-

gard to the whole of the clause, every man must feel, and every man must acknowledge, that libels of the most seditious and dangerous nature were daily published, tending to excite sedition, and to disturb, if not to subvert the government and constitution of the country, for which, the law as it stood had as yet provided no adequate remedy. With regard to the danger that the noble and learned lord had stated, as likely to arise from entrusting ministers with such powers, what other security had the people, or could the people have for the due and faithful execution of all the various powers and authorities vested in government, but the responsibility of ministers, that was the security which the constitution gave, and the only security, that in the nature of things could be given.

After farther conversation, and upon the Lord Chancellor expressing a wish for more time to turn the proposed amendment in his mind, the Duke of Leeds readily agreed to suspend its consideration till a future stage of the Bill.

The *Earl of Lindisdale* rose again and said, that the question moved by the noble Duke being disposed of, he felt it his duty to answer the remark of the noble Lord, when he stated the impropriety of his noble and learned friend having left the house. He defended the noble and learned Lord from any charge of disrespect to the House, by reminding their Lordships how liable his noble and learned friend was to indisposition, sure he was, that his noble and learned friend had not been actuated by the smallest wish to avoid the discussion of such a question. His great experience and ability, the uniform decorum and respect with which he had so long presided in that house, and the particular strength of argument which he had that day used, were sufficient grounds for his defence, even if they did not know that his state of health was such that it prevented him from remaining so long as he himself wished, or so long as from his great ability, not only he, but the house, would wish for his presence. If the responsibility so much talked of meant any thing that could immediately affect the persons, characters, or fortunes of ministers, they all knew how enquiries tending to that issue had been treated, particularly since the present ministers had been in power; and here he must repeat what he had said on a former night, and what never could be forgotten, as coming from the mouth of a noble Duke (the Duke of Portland) now high, and whose words he sincerely believed that much of the calamities and distresses which the country now suffered was owing to the conduct of the persons at present in office.

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The *Lord Chancellor* regretted that he should ever have to contend upon any thing disorderly in that house, though he could not deny that the noble and learned Lord had been perfect in order. After having advanced opinions upon clauses of the Bill which were afterwards to be discussed, it was but reasonable and just that he should have waited till he had understood whether those opinions were confirmed or controverted; indeed after such a speech as the noble and learned Lord had made, he was scarcely at liberty to leave the house, until his argument had either been acceded to or answered. He was sensible how incompetent he was to make any observations upon the speech of that noble and learned Lord who had preceded him upon the woolsack, and whom he followed as closely as he could, though *baud passibus equis*; but there were some parts of it from which he could not help differing in opinion. Instead of disapproving of the clause in which it is provided that no person shall be prosecuted unless it be by order of the King or of his council, he admired it because it removed the odium from attaching to any particular individual, and made his Majesty's Secretary of State, and the various persons who composed his council, responsible for the indictment of every person. So far then from its being an engine in the hands of government to accelerate any summary process, it became a check upon the government, and retarded the prosecution. It had been objected also by another noble Lord that too much discretionary power was entrusted to the Secretaries of State in leaving them the liberty to prosecute or not, as they should think proper; but surely the noble and learned Lord, as well as the noble Earl, had forgotten that as the law now stands, there is a similar discretion in the office and authority of the Attorney General. The Attorney General at present may file an information against any person for an offence which he deems cognizable, and may afterwards follow it up with an indictment, and at a subsequent stage, he may issue his writ of *noli prosequi*, and all further proceedings must be qualified. It was clear therefore that the clause was both necessary and well planned, since it took the whole responsibility out of the hands of the Attorney General, and rested it on the King's ministers and every person who composed his Majesty's privy council, who would of course be careful how they acted.

The *Earl of Lauderdale* imagined that the noble Lord supposed the noble and learned Friend had lost the use of his faculties with his health, and no longer remembered any thing of the law or constitution of the country. His noble and

learned Friend could not surely be supposed ignorant of the power and authority of the Attorney General to file an indictment, follow it up with an indictment, and afterwards to abandon it with a writ of *noli prosequi*. His noble and learned Friend had very wisely remonstrated against the confiding such a discretionary power to his Majesty's ministers or privy council, not because they might first commence a prosecution and afterwards abandon it with a writ of *noli prosequi*, when they found they had not sufficient proofs of criminality, but because they were at liberty to prosecute upon any trifling misdemeanour, where they were prejudiced, while they passed over offences of more magnitude with impunity. Indeed, he had rather the power should still have remained with the Attorney General, for he was a man that had been used to exercise his reason, to examine and compare facts, and then draw his conclusions, whereas the persons who formed his Majesty's privy council were by habit disposed to see things through a particular, and perhaps a prejudiced medium. He never therefore could be convinced of the benefit or propriety of such a clause, and consequently gave it his decided opposition.

The Lord Chancellor said he never so far flattered himself as to imagine he should be able to convince the noble Earl, he begged leave to state however, that any person under an indictment of treason, or sedition, was already as much under the direction and controul of his Majesty's ministers and privy council, as they could be after the passing of this Bill, for after the Attorney General has framed the indictment, it is not in his power to stop the proceedings, unless authorized by the sign manual of his Majesty so to do.

The Earl of Caernarvon expressed a hope that this Bill would not weaken or do away the authority of the House of Commons to impeach any minister who should maliciously and advisedly incite or stir up the people to the hatred or dislike of his Majesty or the constitution. He understood that the House of Commons maintained this authority, in what particular right that authority was founded he was not able to determine, and therefore, as it was necessary the Bill should be clear and explicit, he wished that matter to be explained; there being as much mischief to be apprehended from ministers as from other persons.

The Lord Chancellor informed the noble Earl that no criminal prosecution could be instituted against a minister but by impeachment, and that although an indictment might be presented to the House of Commons, it must be taken into consideration by the House. Therefore the law in such cases remained

remained precisely as it was, and this Bill had nothing to do with it.

It was suggested by the *Duke of Leeds*, that there obviously was a degree in all acts of sedition, and from the difference of circumstances some were less criminal than others, it would be proper to alter the penal part of the clause, and instead of adjudging transportation for seven years for all conviction of high misdemeanours under the act, to leave the punishment to the discretion of the court.

Lord Grenville admitted the propriety of the proposed amendment, and after farther conversation it was modified, and settled to stand as follows.

“ And if any person or persons shall, after being so convicted, offend a second time, and be thereupon convicted, before any commission of oyer and terminer, or gaol delivery, or in his Majesty's Court of King's Bench, such person or persons may, on such second conviction, be adjudged, at the discretion of the court, either to be banished this realm, or to be transported to such place, as shall be appointed by his Majesty for the transportation of offenders, for such term as the court may appoint, not exceeding seven years.”

The *Duke of Bedford* declared, he could not let the clause pass without giving it his decided opposition. He looked upon it as a daring attack and flagitious outrage on the liberty of the subject, and felt as a man that might meet the penalty in making this declaration. He then advanced to the observations of a noble Prelate, and in contradiction to him, said, he must regard every borough as a component part of the House of Commons, and every law a component part of the constitution. Otherwise, accord'g to the opinions of the noble Prelate, a man might first write or speak against the representation of the borough of Old Sarum with impunity, and so go on singly, from borough to borough, and from county to county, till he had traversed the whole system of the representation of the House of Commons was destroyed, and upon this principle he concurred in the amendment of the noble Earl for the provision of a clause, which would prevent from destroying that branch of the legislature, and would prevent, ending of stirring up the people to be so violent and unprovoked attacks; but to the contrary, that such a general

man, in an advertisement for an assembly to be held the next day, to deliberate and discuss the present Bill.

The *Bishop of Bath* explained, by stating, that any person or body of individuals who felt themselves particularly oppressed by any partial law, he conceived, had a right to meet and represent their grievances to the Legislature, as the snuff manufacturers formerly did on the excise of snuff, and the West India planters against the abolition of the slave trade.

The house then divided on the clause.

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After a short conversation the house was resumed, and notice given that the report of the committee would be received the next day.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

WEDNESDAY, Nov. 11.

A petition of the mayor, aldermen, assistants, and common council of the borough of Colchester, was presented by Sir George Jackson, setting forth that the petitioners are shocked at, and view with the utmost abhorrence, the outrages lately committed against the sacred person of his Majesty, by a wicked and lawless set of miscreants, at the very moment that his Majesty was in the execution of his high function in the constitution, that of opening the parliament, that the petitioners cannot help considering it as a violent intrusion on the privileges of parliament, and which offences they consider as the vile agents of some more ambitious and evil designing persons, enemies not only to the best of kings, but to the will of all governments, firmly believing that these criminal attempts were made in consequence of some premeditated designs and wicked determinations, formed at those seminaries of sedition, the associations for political debates, lectures, and other held in London and in diverse parts of the country. Impressed with these ideas, the petitioners feel it a duty they owe to the nation, to call attention to themselves, in order to prevent the same from being introduced into their most sacred assemblies, the House of Commons, and, if the House of Commons be not sufficiently energetic, in their present state, to prevent

prevent the repetition of such horrid attempts, the petitioners implore the house to take such measures, either by amendment and alteration of the old laws, or by the formation of new ones, as the house, in their wisdom, shall think most likely to afford complete protection to his Majesty's person and family, and also to prevent, if possible, all seditious meetings in future.

Ordered to be laid on the table.

A petition of a similar tendency was presented from the borough of Great Yarmouth.

Ordered to be laid on the table.

Mr. *Rose* brought up the Bills for allowing the usual duty on lard and malt, which was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time next day.

The Bill for permitting the amputation of certain silks in ships from any ports at amity with his Majesty, was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time next day.

Mr. *Rose* moved for leave to bring in a Bill to prohibit the exportation of soap and candles for a time to be limited.—Granted.

On reading the order of the day on the Bill for prohibiting generally the exportation, and permitting generally the importation of corn, &c.

Mr. *Ryder* proposed that potatoes, as one of the necessaries of life, should be included, which being agreed to, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

Mr. *Rose* brought in a Bill to prohibit the making of starch out of wheat, barley, rye, potatoes, or any article of the food of man, for a time to be limited. Read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time to-morrow.

Mr. *Rose* brought in a Bill to prohibit the making of low wines and spirits out of wheat, &c. and to prevent the working of distilleries for a time to be limited, &c.—Read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time to-morrow.

Deferred the Committee on Ways and Means and Supply till Friday.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

THURSDAY, November 12.

The Order of the day having been read, and the question put, that the report of the Bill, entitled "An Act for the Safety

Safety and Preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government, against treasonable and seditious Practices and Attempts," be now received, the report was brought up accordingly.

The *Duke of Leeds* begged leave to make his motion of amendment, for correcting the words—"the established government and constitution of this realm," which were so equivocal and indefinite, that no certainty could be obtained as to their true meaning. The noble and learned Lord on the woolsack had said, the preceding day, that his mind was not made up on the occasion, and had wished that he would suspend it, with which he had readily complied, as he should ever be happy to comply with any wish of the noble and learned Lord. He hoped the noble and learned Lord, however, had time to reflect on the subject, and was able either to approve his amendment, or state his reasons for objecting to it. He should therefore move—first, to leave out the words "established government;" and he should afterwards move to insert, after the word "constitution," the words—"consisting of King, Lords, and Commons." He concluded with moving the first amendment.

The *Lord Chancellor* said, he was extremely sorry that he had not even yet made up his mind on the alteration which the noble Duke had suggested. The house had sat so late, and his other avocations the whole of the forenoon, not allowing him properly to attend to it; he had however reflected somewhat on the subject, and words had occurred to him that might not possibly satisfy the noble Duke, in the stead of his proposed amendment. The words suggested by the noble Duke were liable to an objection, as seditious expressions might still be spoken of the government. He would advise therefore to add after the word constitution these words, "as by law established," which would tie and bind up the whole together, and make the sense and sentence entire and complete. These were merely his first reflections; he wished the noble Duke would defer his motion till the third reading.

The *Duke of Leeds* acquiesced.

The *Duke of Bedford* said, he did not rise to object to the motion; but after the most mature consideration, it was impossible for him to give it his support in any stage. He wished merely to call upon the framers of the Bill to consider the measure they were pursuing. That we should be extending our criminal code, in such an enlightened age and such an enlightened country—that we should be following the practice of rude, and, he had almost said, of dark and barbarous

ages, was such a thing as must astonish all Europe, and not only all Europe, but all the civilized parts of the globe. He wished once more to call their lordships' attention to the first clause. As far as related to the compassing the death of the king, the law had wisely made it a capital offence, because, after it was once intended, it became a matter of much ease to carry that intent into execution. There was so short an interval between the intention and the execution of it, that the design might be said to be instantaneously effected. In the case of compassing to levy war, it was far different; there the laws could prevent the mischief, and were already sufficient for it, long before the intent could by any possibility be carried into execution. The only purpose it would effect, would be to sacrifice, perhaps, some zealous fanatic, who might incite and compass the levying war, which, he would say, he never could effectuate, or which the laws now existing were fully competent to crush before the plan could gain maturity.

Lord Grenville hoped the noble Duke would at least give ministers credit, that when they deemed such a Bill necessary, they gave it every consideration, not only as to the measure in general, but as to the extent to which it ought to be carried. He saw but little difference between compassing against the natural life of the king, and against his political life, by the levying of war, which, in its event, must probably terminate the same; for, it was his Majesty's most sacred duty, if circumstances should require it, to protect the constitution in person; and he was sure, if ever the times should require the performance of that duty, it would be executed by the present sovereign with ardour and alacrity. The peculiar exigencies of the times must always be the basis of legislation. Whenever a peculiar evil predominates, it must be met by its appropriate remedy. At one time it might be more easy to incite the minds of men against the person of a monarch, at another time it might be with greater facility be attempted to attack him in his political character. Such reasons would therefore prove the necessity of different measures at different times. In this they were not following the practice of rude and barbarous ages, but pursuing the conduct adopted by all preceding legislators; for, by the statute-book, it would appear, with the exception of only one reign, perhaps, that provisions were, reign after reign, made against the several sorts of treasons, which, from the exigencies of the times, were thought to be apprehended. In this measure, therefore, they had only followed the continued usage and practice of their ancestors.

The

The Duke of Bedford said, in calling upon ministers to abandon a part of their Bill, he thought he did not throw any reflection upon their previous consideration of it, because they had already themselves abandoned several parts of the Bill. In respect to what had been urged by the noble Lord, of the continued practice of making treason laws for the exigency of the moment, the noble Secretary would be so good as to recollect that the case was at this time far different from any former one. In several former reigns the king's title had been called in question. His present majesty was the first who, for several reigns, could be said to be firmly seated on his throne. His predecessors had not been without pretenders to their crowns, and these pretenders were supported by many adherents. This offered some apology for such extension of the criminal code; but, he again declared, it was impossible at this time to carry the compassing to levy war into immediate effect; while, on the contrary, from the practice of civilized nations, as a monarch was not always surrounded with his guards, any one almost might take his natural life, who would risk his own in the attempt. This was sufficient ground, in his mind, to make a distinction in the punishment. He lamented we should be extending our criminal code, while all civilized countries were contracting theirs. Men, indeed, began to think that they had not that extensive right over the lives of their fellow-creatures, unless, where by murder they shewed themselves obnoxious to their species.

Adjourned till next day.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THURSDAY, November 12.

The Land and Malt Bills were read a second time, and ordered to be committed.

The Bill for allowing the importation of a certain sort of Silk in ships from any port at amity with his Majesty, passed the Committee, and the report was ordered to be received next day.

The Bill to prevent the exportation of Soap and Candles was brought up and read a first time: ordered to be read a second time next day.

The Bill to prohibit the making of Starch out of any article of the food of man was read a second time, and ordered to be committed to a Committee of the whole House next day.

The Bill to prevent the making of Low Wines and Spirits, from Wheat, &c. and to prohibit the working of Distilleries, for a time to be limited, was read a second time, and ordered to be committed to a Committee of the whole House.

The *Master of the Rolls* presented a Petition from the inhabitants of Bath, (the same in words and effect with that presented to the House of Lords on the Friday preceding by the Duke of Portland): stating their abhorrence of the atrocious insult offered to his Majesty on the first day of the present session of parliament; their belief that it was connected with certain clubs, meetings, and societies held in and about the metropolis; and praying that, if the laws are inadequate to the prevention of such outrages in future, they may be amended, &c.

Ordered to be laid on the table.

RELIEF OF THE POOR.

Mr. Sergeant prefaced a motion for the better maintenance and employment of the poor, in that part of Great Britain called England, with a speech of some length. In proportion to the scarcity and dearth of provisions, he wished some regulation might be adopted, by assessments in the several hundreds and districts, to furnish them relief proportionate to the circumstances and exigencies of the times.

He concluded with moving, That leave be given to bring in a Bill for the better relief of the poor of that part of Great Britain called England, to explain and amend an act for the better maintenance and employment of the poor, and to enlarge the power of the guardians of the poor within certain hundreds and districts, &c. &c.—Leave was given to bring in the Bill.

The *Secretary at War* brought up the various Army Estimates, &c. of the year.—Which were ordered to be laid on the table.

He said he intended to submit them to the consideration of the House next day se'nnight.

General Tarleton said he was glad that these estimates were brought forward, and that a discussion on them was soon to take place, by that criterion the people of England would be enabled to see and estimate the capacity of his majesty's ministers, and the prospect of success of the present war.

The house having continued still and silent for a few minutes,

Lord William Russell rose, and said, that as there appeared to be no business before the house, he moved "That it should
Journ."

Mr.

Mr. Secretary Dundas said, the present motion was not consistent with that sort of civility which was commonly observed on occasions of importance. He therefore hoped the noble Lord would not persist in his motion.

Mr. Grey said, he did not think that the attempt which had been just made to rebuke his noble Friend was justified upon this occasion. It was no matter of surprise to him to hear that an attempt was to be made to bring forward the Bill to prevent public meetings. It was a subject of too much importance to be brought forward in so hasty a manner, and without that sort of notice which had been usual on such occasions. This was no better than an attempt to surprise many gentlemen whom the minister knew to be inimical to the Bill, and to smuggle the Bill through one of its stages; for he had not heard that any such thing was intended to be done that night, until after he had come to the house. He thought, therefore, that his noble Friend's motion was perfectly right, for there were many Gentlemen who would wish to take part in the discussion of this alarming measure, but who were not present in the house, because they had no idea that the Bill was to be brought forward. He thought himself, under all the circumstances, called upon to support the motion for adjournment.

Mr. M. Robinson supported the motion also. He thought the Bill itself highly injurious to the interests of the publick; but for ministers to complain of the motion to adjourn such a subject as this, was to add insult to injury. If ministers were determined to carry this Bill through, it was to be remembered there was an ultimate resource for the people—they had a power in themselves. [Here there was a great cry of order! order! and *Mr. Robinson* sat down.]

Lord W. Russell said, that notwithstanding the accusation against him of the want of civility upon this occasion, he would adhere to his motion, and he felt himself justified in persisting, because nothing like a notice had been given that this Bill was to be brought forward that day. He had not imagined that any minister would have dared at this time to have brought forward, without notice, a Bill which tended to annihilate the popular part of the Constitution of England.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said he would not detain the house a moment longer than was necessary. He had been out a minute or two upon business, while an Honourable Gentleman was on his legs to make a motion, and not many minutes had elapsed since he came into the house: gentlemen complained extremely of the bringing forward of this Bill without notice. What notice did they mean? There was a resolution

resolution of the house itself, commanding certain members to prepare, and bring in this Bill, without delay. He was one of those members, and he should be guilty of a breach of his duty if he had delayed the bringing in of the Bill a moment after it was prepared: for the orders of the House, especially when it imposed commands on its own members, should be punctually complied with. He meant to have presented that Bill at the bar within a few seconds, but for the motion of adjournment. It was on the day he moved for leave to bring in the Bill, that he agreed to the call of the house, but he then stated what he should state again, viz. that the call should not delay the progress of the Bill in any of its stages previous to the third reading; it was, he said, his intention, in a day or two to name an early day for the second reading; and the house were to be called upon to go on with a measure under circumstances that required as much dispatch as the nature of the case would admit. Circumstances of equal importance, since the house agreed that the Bill should be brought in. The question for the house, at present, was, whether they should support their own dignity? Whether they would perform their duty to themselves, to their sovereign, and to their country; and suffer him to go to that bar and present the Bill which had been prepared by their order for the safety of the country, and to protect it from the desperate attempts of desperate men, who seemed to be plotting its destruction?

Mr. Lambton said, upon every possible view of the subject, he was convinced his noble friend was justified in bringing forward his motion, because it was not generally understood that the first reading of the Bill was to be moved that day. It was certainly usual to give notice when an important Bill was to be brought in and read a first time. In point of strictness of form, the minister was certainly regular. When, however, he told the house that the Bill was become the more necessary from recent transactions, [a great cry of hear! hear!] Mr. Lambton said they should hear. He knew to what the Right Honourable Gentleman alluded; he alluded to an attempt to convene the people to oppose this Bill. They ought to be convened to oppose it; for it was a Bill, which, if passed, would accomplish the destruction of their liberties. The people, notwithstanding all the threats of ministers, would meet, and would determine against this measure. He had no doubt that the great majority would shew their abhorrence of this Bill; they were not to be deterred by the fear of being called desperate men, because they had to do for their countrymen. Consider this measure well, deliberate.

upon it, look at it, see the effect of it. If you think it a desirable measure say so, petition the king and parliament, and exert your best rights."

Mr. *Curwen* said, notice should have been given of an intention to bring in the Bill that day. He could not help adverting to what had been said on this Bill by the Secretary of State on the night that leave was given to bring it in; it was then declared by that minister, that unless this Bill was sanctioned by the majority of the people, it ought not pass. He would therefore say, let the people know the Bill. He wished the Bill to be distributed throughout every part of the country. He wished every man to see it, every man to judge of it; he wished no measure to be adopted that could not be agreeable to the people, for he knew that the best security for the government was the attachment of the people. He had no object but that a fair opportunity should be had to examine this Bill, both in that house and out of it. There were many able members of that house who were absent under an idea that the Bill could not be brought in that day, because there had been no notice of it. He felt himself bound to support the motion for adjournment.

Mr. *Courtenay* said, as the Secretary of State did not wish that the Bill should pass, unless it was agreeable to the people at large, it was very extraordinary that an advantage should be attempted to be taken to bring the Bill forward so suddenly. It was notorious that ministers had seized the moment of striking a deadly blow at the rights and liberties of this country; they fastened on the outrage offered to his Majesty as a pretext and colour for their insidious designs. Ministers might smuggle the Bill through that house, but they would never be able to smuggle it through the country. The people would not surrender their rights into the hands of the most weak, base, corrupt, contemptible administration that ever disgraced this country.

Mr. *Secretary Dundas* said, that gentlemen invented words for him that were not uttered by him, and proceeded to argue upon them as if he had used them; although they had not the least resemblance to what he said. When the call of the house was mentioned, he had said "It was his opinion, that unless this Bill had the wish of the country it ought not to pass," and therefore he seconded the motion for the call of the house.

Mr. *Brandling* professed his earnest and anxious wish to protect the constitution from any attempts whatever to overturn it. He said, he had also a desire that no unnecessary restraints

restraints should be laid on the people. Great care ought, in his opinion, to be taken to examine the provisions of the Bill, and to see they contained nothing hostile to the interest of the people. He, nevertheless, believed that an evil exists, and that some remedy should be applied to it.

Mr. *Duncombe* said, he was not present when this subject had been brought forward. It was that day proposed that the Bill be brought in; which he should not oppose. But he wanted to know when the principle of the Bill was to be chiefly discussed. Was the call of the house to take place before the second reading of the Bill? He wished for information from the minister on that point, because that might determine him.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that he should propose that the Bill be now brought up, and that it should proceed through all its stages up to the third reading, but that the third reading should not take place until after the call of the house. He should, after the first reading, move that the Bill be printed, and propose the second reading on Tuesday next.

General M'Leod said, that he would vote for the question of adjournment; and that he should be very sorry if it should not be carried; because he thought the Secretary of State's declaration, that the measure was sanctioned by the common voice of the people, was as gross an insult to the nation at large, as could possibly be offered, by a most insidious and wicked set of ministers; every step of precipitancy which ministers took in this flagitious measure, tended to shew the people what sort of a thing it was, and to prove that ministers are themselves ashamed of it.

The question of adjournment was put and negatived.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* then brought up the Bill, the title being read, and the question put, "That this Bill be now read a first time."

Mr. *Lambton* rose to oppose it. He began with alluding to what Mr. Alderman Lushington had said on a former night. That worthy magistrate, he observed, at said, who could doubt that the meaning of those who met at Copenhagen-house was to excite that spirit which afterwards broke out in an outrage against his Majesty? But could the worthy alderman prove, to the satisfaction of the house, any connection between those who attended that meeting, and the persons who had so daringly insulted his Majesty? He should have shewn some connection between the two, before he drew a conclusion that the one was the result of the other. The house

might

might recollect how the minister had acted, when he caused the Habeas Corpus act to be suspended. There was a little decent delay, for the case was referred to a committee to examine evidence, and to make their report to the house, and a voluminous report, containing a statement of the proceedings of the London Corresponding Society had been made. Some regard was had to form in that transaction, although finally it appeared, after full trial, that the charge was groundless. In the present instance, there was nothing of evidence before the house, nothing of the existence of any plot, but the mere assumptions of the proclamation. This was the work of ministers, who came to that house with it, and said, "it is our will that you believe every word of it."

Sic volo, sic jubeo, stat pro ratione voluntas.

Mr. *Canning* rose to support the motion for reading the Bill. That there was an intimate connection between the proceedings at Copenhagen-house, and the disgraceful outrage which followed he said, was so obvious, that he professed himself astonished, that any man possessed of common powers of reason, should doubt it. An attempt had been made against the king, and a doctrine was preached on the practice of "king-killing." The doctrine was preached, and the attempt was made. The designs of the speakers were not disguised; they publicly declaimed against majesty and government. He did not then see how gentlemen could be so blind to plain and evident facts; they wanted to disguise what the declaimers and orators had no idea in concealing. If, then, the attack on our most gracious sovereign immediately followed the circulation of such abominable doctrine, he did not see how the connection could be discredited. There was a plea used, it was true, that they were assembled for the purpose of petitioning Parliament: but this, it was easy to perceive, was only a pretext to deceive.

Mr. *Stanley* said, he could not hear this without calling to order. A meeting was held, and the doctrine of king-killing preached at it. This was disorderly. Could the house hear of such preaching.

The *Speaker* said, he submitted to the house, whether the honourable member transgressed any rules when he was called to order? Had he thought so, he should himself have called him to order.

Mr. *Canning* proceeded. His argument he said was simply this: An attempt had been made of a heinous nature. It was

made at the time when the doctrine was held forth, the doctrine of resistance having been maintained by the field orators of the rostra near Copenhagen-house, only three days previous to the attempt made on his majesty; and yet some gentlemen would still say, that the doctrine and the fact had no connection. The house had agreed that a Bill should be brought up, and yet some gentlemen would have them persevere in their ignorance of its contents.

Mr. *Lambton* said, he had heard some persons talk of hand-bills, in which the doctrine of king-killing was inculcated. He never saw any such hand-bill, and he did not believe there was any foundation for charging it on those who composed that meeting. If the Honourable Gentlemen had any knowledge of them, he ought to have prosecuted the circulators of matters so mischievous.

Lord *William Russell* said, with regard to the hand-bill which had been mentioned to contain the doctrine of king-killing, he declared upon his honour, he had never before heard of it. He could not believe it; however, if such hand-bill had really been distributed, he would ask whether there were not laws enough in force to punish those who had been guilty? He thought there must be law against treason.

Mr. *Sheridan* began with observing, that an Honourable Gentleman had stated, that there was a connection between the proceedings at Copenhagen-house, and the insult which had been offered to his majesty. He had also alledged that the doctrine of king-killing had been inculcated by distributing a hand-bill. The connection that he wanted Mr. Sheridan said, was a connection between what that gentleman said and the fact; for until he gave some proof of it, it was a little too much to call on the house to come to that conclusion. For his own part he declared his utter disbelief of it. There might indeed be hand bills written and distributed, and most probably were so, as others had been before them, by spies and informers. He was warranted in saying this, for practices of this sort had been proved. Ministers had propagated such libels frequently through the medium of their scandalous and disgraceful tools. Could that be doubted? Had it not been stated at the Old Bailey by Lynam, one of the informers, who admitted that he was paid by government for what he did, and that he was obliged to make extravagant speeches and propositions in some meetings to prevent his being suspected as a spy?

If, therefore, there were any of these hand-bills distributed at Copenhagen-house, the probability was, that the persons
who

who handed them about were the spies of government, and that they were paid for it at the treasury. That, Mr. Sheridan said, was his belief. With regard to the late meeting, what was the probability of this doctrine of king-killing having been held forth? The meeting was not in a close room or a place that was inaccessible. Did any person there shew such a determination? It was not a meeting where clamour was general, which is sometimes the case at public places. It was a meeting where lectures were delivered from particular places erected for that purpose, and if there had been held forth the doctrine of king-killing, it was utterly impossible for the thing to pass by without being noticed. The notoriety of the whole proceeding proved the falsity of the particular assertion. There was but little doubt but that it would have been soon put into a train of proof; and now that this subject had taken the turn it had done, as so much stress had been laid on the connection between the proceedings at these meetings and the insult offered to the king, he should take the liberty of moving for a committee to inquire into the facts, as was done in that house on the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act. This he thought it his duty to do on account of the manner in which ministers had treated the subject. They had in the King's speech asserted that almost all discontent was put an end to, and now they alledged that it was so great as to make more rigorous measures necessary than any that have been proposed since the revolution. He believed indeed, that ministers endeavoured to impose on the public in this, as they had done on a former occasion.

Mr. *Morris Robinson* asked, why was there not a guard at the meeting? The honourable gentleman who told the story of king-killing, put him in mind of a pamphlet, "*Killing no Murder.*"

"Heard ye the din of battle bray?"

Had then his majesty's ministers, he asked, reduced his majesty to the perilous condition of the proteutor? Had they rendered the aspect of his reign odious? Mr. M. Robinson further observed, that the liberties of this country had never been better cherished than under the house of Brunswick, but, ministers were endeavouring to make this reign similar to the reign of Tiberius.

Mr. *Curwin* said, he saw the Bill was pregnant with every mischief, if pamphlets, such as he had heard stated that night, had really been distributed, where had government been, and what had they been about? Why did they not prosecute the au-

thors? There was no man in that house, more ready than he was to agree to a law to punish those who shall be found guilty of any insult to his majesty, or who endeavoured to overturn the constitution; but before he agreed to any new law, he must be convinced that the present law was inadequate. With regard to the present Bill he was sure it was one which required the mature deliberation of the public. If there were plots, let them have evidence of them. Before they proceeded to measures of that kind they ought to be very cautious. If they looked to history, they would find no instance of such a measure, not even upon the most critical occasions. Nothing short of making it impossible for the people to make known any of their complaints he believed was intended. The societies he believed would, at last, give the Right Honourable Gentleman a colour for passing such a Bill, a Bill that struck at the root of freedom! He had a family; and he wished to bequeath his fortune and liberty to his children. He was a lover of the constitution of his country, and he wished to transmit it to posterity; but he despaired so to do if the Bill passed into a law. He wished, at least, to have some precedents. Did the country, he asked, in times of the greatest danger resort to such a measure? If the Bill passed, he contended, the third clause of the Bill of Rights, which enabled the people to petition, was no more. It was said by ministers, that they would not go against the voice of the people. Let, then, the sentiments of the people be ascertained, and do not pass the measure by surprize. He was ready to accede to any measure which would not fetter liberty. But he cautioned gentlemen how they shackled a free people! He advised rather the calling ministers to an account, for expending the public money on a most destructive war; a war which gave rise to all the present grievances and disturbance.

Mr. *Alderman Lushington* declared, he had seen no reason to change the opinion which he gave on this subject on a former night, viz. that there was a connection between the proceedings at Copenhagen-house, and other meetings in and about the metropolis, and that cowardly attempt on the sovereign. He did not take upon him to say, that *king-killing* was publicly mentioned at the meeting; but he was aware, that whoever considered the doctrines circulated there, must see, that it was radically and virtually intended. He himself was once an advocate for reform; and when he was a candidate for the city, he had stated his mind on that head. He was still of the same opinion, he wished well to the liberty of his country. But when our hemisphere was shadowed with political gloom, he thought it was not a moment

ment for reform. This was his reason for withdrawing himself from his friends in the business of reform. He represented a numerous body of men, and they felt the impression that he did; they thought that some measure ought to be adopted; but it ought to be that which had all possible tenderness for public rights. He would submit to a partial and temporary sacrifice for the general good; but he was ready to say that he did not wish the measure proposed by this Bill, made a permanent law of this country. He should wish to see it made nothing more than an annual regulation at most.

General Smith said, he objected to the question, but he wished to hear the provisions of the Bill, because he thought it would be right that the house should know what the Bill was.

The *Speaker* considered the honourable gentleman to be out of order, in calling for the provisions of the Bill before it had been read a first time.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* enforced what the *Speaker* had stated, and said, it was usual to let a Bill be read a first time, and then the sense of the house might be taken on it.

Mr. *Grey* said, that the nature of the Bill was such, that he thought it his duty to oppose it in all its stages.

The *Speaker* said, that it was true, gentlemen might avail themselves of debating the Bill as it stood, consistently with the forms of the house.

Mr. *Grey* said, that on the present occasion, he did not mean to enter at large into the Bill. He rose chiefly for the purpose of entering his protest against the time that had been chosen for bringing it forward. There ought to have been notice given of its being to be brought forward; that not having been the case, the consequence was, that the Bill was to be proposed to pass one stage in the absence of some of the most eloquent members of that house.

Much had been said on the connection that was alledged to subsist between the proceedings at Copenhagen-house and the late insult which had been offered to his Majesty. That outrage excited in his breast the sensations that every good subject ought to feel upon so detestable an act; from a view of all the evidence that he knew of, he was, however happy to say he did not believe that in the outrage which was offered to the king, any person had a thought of affecting the life of his Majesty. He was far from thinking, nevertheless, that the authors of the outrage ought not to be punished; punished they ought to be, undoubtedly, and that with the utmost rigour of the law, because if any man does that which his reason ought to tell him may bring on the death of the king, he is guilty of treason, without, in his own mind, previously intending

intending to kill the king. This was his opinion decidedly, yet he did not wish it to go to the country, that he was of opinion there was one individual who had an idea of assassinating the king. He did not believe that the insult to his Majesty originated at Copenhagen-house. It was said, that the doctrine of king killing was preached there. He knew nothing of that. He had indeed been informed that a hand-bill was circulated, which stated something, what he could not tell, about king-killing. His own feelings on the subject were that the Bill was unnecessary, because the laws already in existence appeared to him fully sufficient to repress the evil. If ministers had neglected to prosecute those who had basely made an attack upon the life of our sovereign, was that a reason why all the liberties of the people of England should be taken from them?

Where an honourable friend of his had stated what had been treated with derision, viz. That if these hand-bills were distributed at the meeting at Copenhagen-house, they must have been distributed by persons who were employed for that purpose. He could not help thinking that those who were serious in committing the act, would not have taken that mode, because he could not believe that such persons, with such views, would have run the risk to which, by that mode, they must be exposed. He could rather conceive what had been heard in evidence and proof, that persons employed as spies, or rather, to use a more fashionable phrase, "employed as reporters," persons wishing to make their information the more valuable, had done it. Proof of this had been manifested at the Old Bailey. He would ask, whether some of these persons had not used the most violent language? Had not a person been executed at Edinburgh, who was a spy, acting upon the order of ministers and paid by them, and on whom, there being no other person, they inflicted the penalty of death? He did not believe there was any thing said or done at the meetings near the metropolis to provoke this outrage to his Majesty, and therefore he did not believe there was any connection between them; and he could not, on that ground, give his countenance to a law, by which all our liberties were rooted up; neither could he help deploring the state of the people of this country at this moment; they had felt the effect of famine last year to a certain extent, and they had a prospect of feeling it again, and this Bill was intended to put it out of their power to make any complaint. Their mouths are to shut, although they are to be ruled with a rod of iron. Considering the Bill in the light that he did, Mr. Grey said, it was a Bill that he should oppose in that house.

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and out of that house; and, if he should be so fortunate as to contribute to the reprobation of it on the part of the people, and he earnestly hoped, their attention would be duly directed to it, he should think he had done considerable service to his country.

The Right Hon. Gentleman had laid great stress on the necessity of this Bill. He could by no means agree with him in that point. That the law was at this moment deficient, was more than he could believe. It had been sufficient to preserve King William, against whose life a plot had been formed, and no king's life in England had ever been more valuable than that of King William. The law, as it stood, had protected the state during two rebellions; he must therefore believe, that the law existing was sufficient as it stood; if so he could not assent to a Bill that took away all the liberties of Englishmen. For these reasons, Mr. Grey said he must oppose the Bill, in this, as he should do in every other stage of its progress in that house.

Mr. *H. Duncombe* said, he considered a Bill, like the present, that tended to restrain the free discussion of political subjects as a matter of the greatest importance—of more importance than any that had been introduced into that house since the revolution. But, when he mentioned the revolution, he could not but observe, that if a Bill of that tendency had taken place before 1688, there had been no revolution. We had been still grovelling under the despotism of the house of Stuart. He said, he had witnessed with horror the behaviour of the mob to the king, on the first day of the session; he regarded that as a transaction, which degraded the generous English character, which disdained base insult and unmanly outrage. He wished to see the kingly part of the constitution protected, but there was another part of it that deserved no less attention, namely, the democratical. The regal and democratical parts were equally essential to its perfection. He had heard of meetings that had given him much concern, as it was intimated to him, that very detestable doctrines were broached there; but if those present had been guilty of any excess, were they not amenable to the laws? If the existing laws were not thought sufficient, he would willingly consent to other laws—to any laws that wounded not the vital principles of the constitution. He thought the free discussion of political subjects was one of those principles. He wished not to engraft upon that love we feel for the sovereign; on that sentiment in which so decided a majority of the people were united—a measure that crippled the freedom of political discussion. The minister, whom he had long supported, would
not

not wish to discredit popular meetings, for, in addition to his merit, he was considerably recommended to his Majesty's favour, by the opinion the people had expressed of him; and he was confident that he would not kick down the ladder, the constitutional ladder, by which he had mounted to eminence and distinction. He could not approve of the Bill in its present form, as he liked not to leap over those out-works of our constitution, those barriers of freedom, which our ancestors had ever respected. He would not, however, object to the first reading of the Bill, to judge further of its nature and extent.

Mr. *Wilberforce* said, that he felt the utmost regret upon the present occasion to find himself under the necessity of differing with his Honourable Friend (Mr. *Duncombe*), with whom, upon every constitutional question, he had formerly had the happiness to agree. He was sure, however, that the sentiments his honourable friend had expressed were dictated by his total misconception of the Bill. He was sorry, when notice of it first was given, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not gone at greater length into an explanation of the nature of it, to prevent any mistake or misrepresentation of its contents; a precaution which, he was now the more convinced, was extremely necessary. When his Honourable Friend talked of the bars and mounds erected round to protect, what he justly styled, the palladium of British liberty, being overthrown, he was not aware that this very Bill raised new bastions for its security, and so far from weakening, strengthened the bulwarks by which it was defended. There was nothing contained in it that, in his apprehension, touched on the essential right of the constitution. It abolished none of the privileges which Englishmen could legally exercise. The right of holding popular assemblies and of discussing public affairs was preserved by this Bill to every extent which ought to be permitted, or which the existing laws authorized.

General Tarleton said, that he had heard expressions employed that night which he did not understand, and which called seriously on the attention of the house, and required an explanation. Much had been spoken of certain hand-bills, in which the doctrine of king-killing was inculcated, and the practice recommended. For his part he had never heard that such hand-bills existed, and he thought it highly proper that the Honourable Gentleman who had introduced this subject should explain to the house upon what authority the assertion was made, and from what sources he derived his information.

He.

He could not follow the Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Wilberforce) through his ancient and modern fortification. The Honourable Gentleman seemed to have walked with tottering steps upon this new ground, and had stumbled over the parapet of prerogative into the ditch of despotism. It was unnecessary to strip him of that pomp of language, that solemnity of manner, which he had affected; those sophisticated sentiments with which he attempted to colour his support of the present measure. He observed that wars now became unpopular in proportion to their duration. Amidst the load of national debt, and the taxes with which the people were burthened, the resources of a state were soon exhausted. He hoped he should incur no ridicule, if he reminded the house of an observation he had made upon the discussion of a motion of his Right Honourable Friend (Mr. Fox) at the beginning of the war three years ago, that he was sure the war, were it undertaken, would produce ultimately either anarchy or despotism. Have not the resources of this country been stretched in the course of it to an unparalleled degree? Is it not true that discontents have been excited by the shameless conduct of administration; by their daring expedients, and by the pressure of that famine to which they have exposed the people of this country? By the eloquence, the indefatigable activity, and address of ministers, the war was in its commencement rendered popular, and the system of artifice, delusion and calumny, had industriously been employed to support it. Now it appeared that the case was reversed, and the arts of ministers could no longer screen from unpopularity, measures, the folly of which could not be concealed. He felt the principle of loyalty as strong within him as any man could boast, and he detested from his soul the attempt against the person of his Majesty, yet he could impute that discontent which had manifested itself, and much of that sedition of which they complained, to the calamities with which the war had been attended, and the misery it had generally diffused. He could not but feel the utmost surprize at the hypocrisy which ministers had displayed at the opening of the session, and the language which the speech from the throne had maintained. It appeared that the outrage committed against his Majesty, with which he himself was then wholly unacquainted, had been perfectly well known to ministers, at the very moment when they allowed the house to echo that part of the speech, which expressed satisfaction at the spirit of order and submission to the laws which had been manifested in the country. In spite of this testimony of their own belief, and of the de-

claration into which they had betrayed the house, they came forward in less than a fortnight, with a Bill of the most violent nature, and of the most unconstitutional tendency, founded upon facts, which in no degree deterred them from maintaining arguments directly inconsistent with their present sentiments and assertions.

General Smith wished that king-killing had not been mentioned; he did not think it a fit theme of discussion within those walls. The General said he would reserve himself for the second reading, though he disapproved of the Bill.

Sir William-Milner said, that although he was not in the habit of obtruding himself upon the attention of the house, he could not be silent when a Bill of such magnitude as the present formed the subject of discussion. He would oppose it because he considered that it would not only be useless for the object to which it was directed, but would prove highly detrimental to the country. He was convinced that the persons who were guilty of the crimes it was intended to prevent might be punished by the existing laws. He was surprised at the observations of a worthy magistrate (*Alderman Lushington*), who complained of the inflammatory hand-bills which were daily circulated. Knowing such practices to take place, without attempting to repress them, involved no small share of blame on the part of the worthy magistrate. If he was not afraid, he might as a magistrate, have exercised powers with which he was not invested, and assumed an authority not conferred by the laws:—he had sat, as a justice, upon the trial of persons accused of distributing inflammatory hand-bills, who, after being found guilty by the jury, had been condemned by the justices to two years imprisonment. At this very period, he knew that there were two or three persons confined in the Castle of York for this very offence. The crime of *Yorke* alias *Redhead*, lately tried at the *York Assizes*, was, his having uttered certain inflammatory speeches; and he had been convicted, and was to be brought to the *King's Bench* to receive sentence. These facts had come under his own observation; and he believed even the *Chancellor of the Exchequer* would not pretend to deny their truth, or the conclusions which necessarily flowed from them. He felt the highest indignation at any seditious attempts which might exist; and he thought ministers ought to do their duty, in endeavouring to suppress illegal meetings, if such took place, and to give directions to magistrates to exert, for this purpose, the authority they possessed. He had heard of a meeting which had taken place that day, where, he understood, the most perfect peaceableness

peaceableness and decorum had prevailed. If this meeting was assembled for the purpose of petitioning the legislature against this Bill, he highly approved of their design. The loyal yeomanry and gentry in various parts had met, and he hoped would meet, to give it their decided opposition. He felt extremely uneasy in differing with some friends on the other side of the house whom he highly esteemed, and whose opinion had so much influence with him, that he could hardly prevail on himself to vote against the Bill. On the subject of the war he had found himself under the necessity of differing with valued friends, especially with one who had possessed a considerable office in administration, which he no longer held, with whom he had generally agreed on public affairs. He was a man attached to no party, and was equally indifferent whether the executive power was administered by the gentlemen on the one or the other side of the House. He was guided solely by motives of public utility and by the best of his judgment, though from his being little used to public speaking he might be unable to explain his sentiments with that eloquence which others could command, and a habit of speaking might bestow.

Mr. *Alderman Anderson* said, he highly approved of the Bill, though he was not yet perfectly master of its contents. He entertained the greatest dread of the seditious meetings which had been held, and thought some strong measure necessary to counteract them. In his journey to town that day, and in the immediate neighbourhood of the road he passed, he saw crowds of people, and enquiring the cause at a turnpike-bar, had been informed that it was a meeting of the Corresponding Society, which had dispersed a good deal, disappointed at an unlucky accident, by which Mr. *Thelwall*, one of their orators, had been deprived of a phaeton belonging to a certain noble Duke, of which he was to have had the loan, and from whence he meant to harangue the multitude.

Mr. *Stanley* said, the privileges of Englishmen were extinguished, if they could not meet when and how they pleased for the discussion of public affairs. To render their conduct subject to the arbitrary controul and summary interference of a magistrate, the purity of whose views might be questionable, was in his mind inconsistent with every idea of freedom and of the constitution.

Mr. *I. Hawkins Browne* thought the Honourable Gentleman's reasons against the Bill were the best that could be given to prove the propriety and expediency of adopting it.

If magistrates were corrupt or arbitrary in the execution of their duty, they were amenable to the laws.

Lord W. Russell said, that as an imputation had been thrown out by a worthy Alderman against the character of a noble Duke, whom he thought it incumbent on the worthy Alderman to name, and to state what reason he had to believe the story which, improbable and foolish as it was, if not properly explained, might be propagated upon the slight foundation of what been stated in the house in a manner highly prejudicial to the character of the noble Duke alluded to; he would therefore move that the debate be adjourned, in order that an enquiry might take place into the facts which had been stated as reasons for supporting the Bill; which motion was seconded.

Mr. Harrison observed, that this was a fresh attempt to calumniate, by the vilest and most despicable artifices, the characters of those who were bold and honest enough to oppose the measures of administration.

Alderman Anderson in explanation said, he had always conceived it to be the undoubted right of every member of that house to state such circumstances as might be connected with the question. He had merely stated what he had heard in his way to town.

Mr. Lambton said he well knew that it was the wish of gentlemen on the other side of the house to blacken and defame the character of those who stood forward in opposition to their measures. It was a part of the foundation on which their system was supported. If the worthy Alderman had acted as he ought to have done, and as candour and liberality dictated, he would have told the person who gave him the information, that it was impossible the matter could stand as represented, or that the noble person alluded to could in any way encourage seditious and disloyal meetings, instead of coming to the house with so poor and miserable an anecdote, which could never impose upon any man who knew the noble Duke, as he (*Mr. Lambton*) knew him, and which might be serious in the consequences it might produce, considering the activity with which it would be propagated. Similar falsehoods, and calumnies equally contemptible, had been employed to render some of his honourable friends suspected:—it had been maliciously asserted, widely circulated, and, where the truth was not known, might even be believed, that letters had been intercepted from them to certain members of the French Convention. Such attacks could be encouraged only

only for the worst of purposes, and merited the severest reprehension.

Mr. *Secretary Dundas* said, he believed nobody could seriously listen to the story they had heard. He was happy to find that the Honourable Gentleman was offended with the freedoms used with character; and he hoped he would endeavour to impress the same sentiment upon one of his Honourable friends near him, (Mr. Grey) who had accused ministers of having conspired to murder one of their own spies. He very successfully ridiculed the wish to adjourn the house, in order to enquire whether the story of a noble Duke and his phaeton were well or ill-founded.

Lord W. Russell said a few words in explanation.

Mr. Grey said, that he should not have risen had he not felt it necessary to explain himself on a point to which the Honourable Secretary of State had alluded. He never had meant to say that ministers had conspired a deliberate murder, and if any thing that fell from him seemed to import such an idea, he wished it to be considered merely as an inadvertency of expression. He had formerly said, that bad as his opinion of the present ministers certainly was, he did not believe they could go so far as to encourage, for their own purposes, any inflammatory hand-bills in which doctrines were inculcated, from which great mischief might eventually arise. Yet it had appeared upon evidence during the state trials, that ministerial agents had taken an active part in popular meetings, and had uttered the most seditious speeches, and promoted the most violent resolutions.

With regard to the matter on which the adjournment was founded, though in itself there could not be a difference of opinion as to its folly and absurdity, it was not in his judgment altogether so unimportant. It was evident from the impression it had made on the mind of the person by whom it was related, that others might feel in the like manner respecting it. It was stated as a reason for supporting the Bill, that persons of high rank had mingled in the intrigues of seditious meetings, and had encouraged them by their countenance and protection. Mr. Grey declared he would support the adjournment, not for the purpose of examining into the truth of a particular allusion, but in order to enquire into and ascertain the actual state of these seditious meetings, before they joined in the clamour against them, and to ascertain the true situation of the public mind, before they countenanced such a libel as the Bill implied upon the people of England.

Mr. *Wilberforce* spoke shortly in explanation.

General

General Tarleton and *Mr. Courtenay* said each a few words.

Mr. Sheridan said the question came to this, that the worthy Alderman, by observing silence, had seemed to persevere in his belief of the story he had told. He was surprised that the Duke of Bedford should be held out as countenancing any meetings which were deemed licentious, when he saw that respected name subscribed publicly to a paper which would confer immortal honour on his character, and was intended to encourage an universal and decided opposition to the present Bill. What the honourable Alderman had stated, was indeed a story which was fit for old wives to tell, and old wives to believe. He imagined the next tale would be that the orators of Copenhagen-house had borrowed bob wigs from the Duke of Norfolk in order to make their appearances. All such idle fables, however, only proved the incessant calumnies to which the opposers of ministers were subject. A shocking instance of the malicious and wicked attempt which arose from the system, which ministers patronised, happened during the state trials last year. At the very time when the bill was before the grand jury, in the case of those men whom a certain Honourable Gentleman chose to term "acquitted felons," a story which could not fail to impress instantly the public mind, of a terrible design to murder the king, by means of some new kind of instrument, was propagated. This was generally credited at the time, yet no such plot had been conceived, he believed, and this instrument no person had ever seen. Notwithstanding this, prints, notoriously in ministerial pay, had said that the instrument was found and the persons fully committed for trial. Thus it was evident how ministers would avail themselves of every incident which occurred, to render men whose influence and character might enable them to oppose their measures with success suspicious.

Strangers being desired to withdraw, a division took place on Lord W. Russell's motion for an adjournment.

<i>Ayes</i>	-	-	32
<i>Noes</i>	-	-	145

<i>Majority</i>	-	113
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The Bill was then read a first time.

Mr. Sheridan said, he was happy to find that the Honourable Gentleman had abandoned part of his plan, since he had expunged the clause which related to private families. He was surprised, however, to find that *meetings in fields*, assembled without regard to the regulations in the Bill, were to be held as disorderly houses.

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The *Chancellor of the Exchequer*, said, he did not intend that the Bill should extend to private families.

Mr. *M. Robinson* asked, since all meetings, to which admittance was obtained by money or tickets, were prohibited, whether card routs were comprehended within the operation of the Bill?

The house then divided on the question—That the Bill be read a second time.

<i>Ayes</i>	-	-	129
<i>Noes</i>	-	-	21

Majority - 108

A second division took place on the question—That this Bill be read a second time on Tuesday following.

<i>Ayes</i>	-	-	129
<i>Noes</i>	-	-	23

Majority - 106

The house adjourned till next day.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

FRIDAY, November 13.

Previous to the order of the day being read, the *Earl of Lauderdale* rose, and said he had a motion to make, which he did not conceive would meet with any objection. As the Bill before their lordships, in its preamble, stated certain facts, it was highly necessary, in order to justify their lordships to themselves and to the world, that the proof of these facts should somewhere appear, and that the public should know the grounds upon which their lordships had entertained a Bill of that extraordinary extent and importance. With that view he moved there be laid before the house a copy of the examination taken by, or by order of his Majesty's Secretary of State, or before his Majesty's most honourable Privy Council, on the subject of the attack made on his Majesty's person on the first day of the present session of parliament.

Lord Grenville said, the noble Earl's motion, at the first glance of it, was so forcibly objectionable and so absolutely improper to be complied with, that he really was astonished that the noble Earl should have ventured to bring it forward. With regard to the flagitious outrage committed on the sacred person of his Majesty in his way to parliament, the fact was not only a matter of the greatest notoriety, but their lordships had

had it in evidence taken at their own bar, and so far from the smallest doubt being entertained of it, it had been confessed and lamented by every one of their lordships who had said a syllable on the subject. Nay, more, the house had made it the ground of an address to his Majesty, beseeching him to direct that the most effectual means be taken, without delay, to discover the authors and abettors of crimes so atrocious. Pursuant to the wishes of both houses of parliament, so expressed in their joint address, his Majesty had been pleased to give directions accordingly, and the matter was at that time in a course of enquiry. Possibly his Majesty's servants might yet be so fortunate not only to discover and obtain proof of the precise mode in which the violence on his Majesty had been committed, but find a clue to the detection of those persons who had been guilty of so daring and flagitious an offence. If therefore ministers were so forgetful of their duty as to lay upon the table all the information that they had obtained, might it not serve to warn the perpetrators of the outrage to get out of the way and elude the punishment due to their guilt. His lordship said, it was needless for him to say more in objection to the motion, as the gross impropriety of it must strike every one present.

The *Earl of Lauderdale* said, he had heard nothing from the noble Secretary that at all served to convince him, that there was the smallest impropriety in his motion. The House it was true, had called witnesses to their bar on the first day of the session, in order to enquire into the nature and extent of the flagitious attack on his Majesty's person, but the whole that he could collect from the evidence so adduced, was that an outrage had been committed on his Majesty. He did not find in that evidence one iota of proof that there was any sort of connection between certain societies, so often alluded to, and the persons who committed the violence on his Majesty, whereas the Bill in its preamble connected the two together, and insinuated that the outrage had proceeded from the multitude of seditious pamphlets and speeches daily printed, published, and dispersed. He must therefore still contend that to justify their lordships to the world, they ought to have some proof before them to shew, that what the preamble assumed was founded. If, however, the noble Lord meant seriously to inform the house that an enquiry was going on, from which a detection of the offenders might possibly result, and which might be rendered fruitless by the effect of his present motion, he would consent to withdraw it.

Lord

Lord Grenville said, he must repeat the objection he had stated a few evenings since to having words of his, or indeed of any individual peer, made the ground of either moving or withdrawing any proposition. To take such ground in any case was wholly unparliamentary and highly improper. He once more reminded the noble Earl that the two houses had carried up an address to his Majesty, in which they express their wishes that his Majesty would direct the most effectual measures to be taken to discover the authors and abettors of the daring outrages offered to him in his passage to and from parliament. That such directions had been given, and that the matter was under enquiry. Upon that ground the noble Earl, if he thought proper, might move to withdraw his motion, but he desired to have it clearly understood, that if the noble Earl did withdraw his motion it would be an act of his own, and not done upon any conditions stipulated on his part.

The *Earl of Lauderdale* said, the noble Secretary of State claimed the privilege of saying what he thought proper without giving ground for other noble Lords to observe upon it, though he on a former occasion had been extremely forward to fasten upon expressions of others, and to state what would have been the consequences out of that house. The evidence delivered at the bar was by no means sufficient to ascertain whether the outrage so much deprecated arose from a regular plot, or an incidental tumult, and the public was perfectly convinced that nothing satisfactory had been obtained from it. The three last witnesses, their lordships would recollect, contradicted each other on many points, and the only fact on which they all agreed was, that the stone by which the window of his Majesty's carriage was broken, did not issue from the house out of which it was said to have come. There was nothing like any evidence of a regular conspiracy; nothing which could authorise the house to proceed on such an idea. From the conduct of his Majesty's ministers, he was thoroughly convinced that the pretence of the advances made in the investigation was a downright imposture, and that they had not discovered any thing which could tend to connect that outrage with the proceedings of any body of men, or to corroborate the assertions they had made on the subject.

The *Lord Chancellor* said, the moment the noble Earl proposed his motion he was perfectly astonished at hearing him, so glaring was its impropriety, that he was surprized it should have escaped the noble Earl. To consider it in no other view, he would content himself with observing that it would

be a criminal breach of trust, and a very high misdemeanour in any magistrate, and in the Secretary of State, as well as every other magistrate, to divulge, without an order of the house, the result of an examination which might form the basis of a prosecution in a court of justice.

Lord Hawkebury brought up some accounts from the Board of Trade, which he moved should be printed.

The Bill for the better security of his Majesty's person, &c. having been, upon motion, read a third time, the *Earl of Lauderdale* said, he had formerly hinted his intention, if the Bill should pass, of moving a clause to extend it to Scotland. Unless some provision were enacted to restrict prosecutions for the offences of sedition and misdemeanour in Scotland, to be conducted on this Bill, an indictment at common law might deprive the people wholly of the benefit of it. He thought that very few words would be necessary to shew the propriety of the house adopting the clause he meant to introduce. Whatever discontents or tendency to sedition existed in England, it was allowed on all hands, that there was none in the country to which he alluded. If the Bill about to be passed was adequate to repress sedition in a country where a disposition to overturn the laws was said to have appeared, it would surely be sufficient where a very opposite spirit prevailed. He could not think it possible that stronger penalties were necessary to repress sedition in a Scotchman than an Englishman. He would therefore propose that there be added the following clause :

“ Provided also and be it enacted that this Act shall extend
“ to that part of Great Britain called Scotland, and that no
“ prosecution shall be there instituted by indictment at com-
“ mon law, or otherwise, for any offence within the provisions
“ of this act, otherwise than under this Act.”

Earl Mansfield said, he would spare the house the trouble of again hearing the arguments he had employed when a motion was made in the course of the last session to alter the laws of Scotland on the subject, at which time he had stated a considerable number of cases to prove, that transportation on conviction of what was there called and known by the name of *Seditio Regni*, was not a new punishment for the offence. Some there were, his Lordship said, whose eloquence could give the charms of novelty to the most common topics—*novus reperta placebit*. But such qualifications were the portion only of the favoured few, and he would not detain their Lordships with a repetition of what he had then urged, though he was ready to meet any noble Lord upon that discussion

once more. He had the happiness to know that the decision of the judges of the Court of Justiciary met with the approbation of every professional man of ability and credit in the country, with the single exception of the noble Earl, who he well knew had studied the law of Scotland, and, if other avocations had not engaged his attention, he would doubtless have proved one of its brightest ornaments. The people of Scotland had long enjoyed the laws which now existed, and those laws were suited to their disposition and inclination. The laws of England and Scotland were by the treaty of union to be maintained perfectly distinct, and on one point alone, viz. the laws of treason, had they been wisely made to agree. With regard to misdemeanours, the laws were totally different. In Scotland, by the law of the land, the punishment was in the power of the judges, or arbitrary, a term which might sound ill in the ears of their lordships, but which was nothing more than another word for discretion. In England, similar crimes were punished in a different manner, yet that was no reason to interfere with the system of criminal justice which had long prevailed in Scotland, and under which they had lived happy and contented. In the present moment it was utterly impossible for the house to comply with the motion of the noble Earl, which had not been brought forward in a regular manner, and surely it would be an act of supererogation to proceed to alter the penal law of Scotland in an essential point, without a single petition from the country upon the table, to call their attention to the subject, without any complaint that the existing law was a grievance, or any wish expressed by the people of Scotland that it should be changed. It was proposed only *cliter*, and appended as a rider to a Bill. The reasons urged in favour of it by the noble Lord were rather extraordinary. He stated that the people of Scotland were perfectly quiet; and in the very same breath that he represents them as living contentedly under their present laws, he moved for an alteration.

The *Earl of Lauderdale* said, that when his Majesty's ministers resorted to the present Bill, and pretended it was necessary to repress the spirit of discontent, which they represented as too strong to be kept in awe by any other than the most powerful remedies, he could not account for their refusal to extend it to Scotland, and their obstinate defence of the system of criminal law prevalent in that country, unless they meant to follow the advice of one of their own body, who had expressed a wish, that the criminal law of Scotland, in cases of sedition, was extended to England, and made the

law here. He was afraid that the present Bill was a step to the realizing of the design. It was, perhaps, only a trial how far the people of England would submit to the approaches to the system, and their acquiescence would lead, at some period not very distant, to its complete adoption. He did not desire to take his notions of the law of Scotland from the noble Earl; but he must contend, that not himself only, but many distinguished lawyers in Scotland, had been of opinion, that the law as stated by the noble Earl (Mansfield), so far from being understood to be the law of the country, that idea had never entered into the head of any but one man, till the conviction of certain persons, which had produced the discussion referred to by the noble Lord, where the doctrine of the noble Earl was broached for the first time.

The *Earl of Mansfield* said, he did not rise to give any answer to the imputation thrown on ministers; he disdained a reply to such a charge; but the summary of the noble Earl's reasoning reminded him of the observation of an old lady, who used to say, "I do not know how it happens, but the minister of the parish and I are always in the right." And repeated his former arguments.

Lord Hawkesbury said, much of what he had wished to offer to their lordships had been anticipated by the noble Earl, who had just sat down, who had so ably stated the strong objections that presented themselves against the noble Earl's motion. His reasons for thinking it ought to be received were certainly somewhat extraordinary. In the first place, the noble Earl had said, that Scotland was at this time in a state of perfect peace, tranquillity, subordination, and order, and had used that observation as an argument to shew, that an alteration of the penal laws of Scotland was necessary. Another matter worthy of remark was, that the noble Earl had, for almost a week together, been endeavouring to persuade their lordships, that the Bill was a violent act of oppression to the subject, that it tended to deprive them of their most valuable privileges, and was founded in injustice and despotism; and that day their lordships had heard the noble Earl call upon them with all the force of his eloquence, and begged that this act of tyranny, injustice, and despotism, might be extended to Scotland, as a boon and a favour to that part of the kingdom.

The *Earl of Hopetoun* said the noble Earl had reduced him to the necessity of rising, in order to express his objection to the proposed clause; the people of Scotland, he well knew, were easy and happy under their penal laws as they stood at present, and if they were severe they deemed it a wholesome severity that they possessed, since it enabled them to get rid of the missionaries

missionaries of sedition, who came to their country with no other view but to persuade them they were unhappy, when they felt the most perfect ease and satisfaction, and that, notwithstanding the essential benefits and blessings they daily experienced, that they ought to be discontented and plaintive. They well knew that their lives, their property, and their liberty, were secured under the existing law of their country, and he was perfectly sure that they did not wish for an alteration.

The motion of the Earl of Lauderdale was then negatived without a division.

Upon the question being put that the Bill do pass,

The *Duke of Bedford* said, after the very ample discussion the Bill before the house had undergone, during its progress to its present stage, he was sensible of the little prospect left him of gaining the attention of their lordships, by novelty of argument, or force of reasoning. It certainly was not his wish or design to occupy their lordships time, by going over the grounds of objection that had already been taken to the Bill. He felt, however, so great a depression of spirits, and found himself so overwhelmed with anxiety of mind, when he contemplated the measure in question, that, he confessed, he was impelled by those sensations to oppose the bill through every stage of it, and would endeavour, by one more effort, one further struggle, to impress their lordships with the sentiments he entertained on the subject. The firm and decided conduct of an opposition, feeble, in point of number, had indeed effected some change in the clauses of the Bill, yet, while the principle was admitted, he had no consolation but in having exerted himself to soften the evil which he could not prevent.

I conceive, said his Grace, this measure to be, not merely an extension of the criminal law, an extension of the general law, but a stab to the constitution, and an attempt to strike at the foundation of the liberties of Englishmen. I shall therefore shortly advert to the reasons by which this measure is supported, and the arguments by which these reasons are enforced. I ought to say reason, for one only has been assigned, namely, the outrage against his Majesty, on the first day of the session. This outrage we all equally lament: the sentiments of regret, and abhorrence which we felt on the occasion, we have stated in our address to his Majesty, and requested him to take all possible means to discover and punish the authors. How then can this Bill operate with respect to that outrage? It is stated that its object is to render the person of his Majesty more secure. No doubt we would all cheerfully

fully concur in any measure, which might tend to the greater security of his Majesty's person. How can the person of his Majesty be rendered more secure? Does it not already possess all the guard which it can derive from the reverence of office, and the enactments of law? Noble Lords are aware of the futility of the pretext, even while they set it up, and that greater security cannot be given to his Majesty's person by any new law than it already possesses from the established constitution. An attempt has been made to connect the outrage against his Majesty, with the proceedings of certain meetings, whose seditious doctrines are said to have been delivered, alienating from his Majesty the affections of his subjects, and exciting their minds to contempt and hatred of the constitution. To this I have only to answer, that, however public and notorious the meetings that had taken place, to the proceedings of those meetings, we cannot legislatively refer; they are not before us in any parliamentary shape, or in any other upon which we can act. I may be told that the notoriety of these proceedings, and the frequent advertisements which we see in the papers calling them together, are sufficient grounds upon which we may go on the present occasion. The assertion which had been made by certain noble lords, that the late brutal and most abominable attack on his Majesty's sacred person, proceeded from persons connected with any political party existing in the country, was such as ought to be immediately repelled; it was an assertion utterly unsupported by the least shadow of evidence, and totally unfounded in fact. It has not been proved, either that their proceedings were of the nature which has been described; much less has it been made out that there existed any connection between those proceedings, and the outrage against his Majesty, or that the persons who attended these meetings were concerned in committing that outrage. It is an argument which rests merely upon assertion; and it were, surely, too much to proceed on so slight a presumption, in a measure of such serious consequences, which goes to create new crimes, and to introduce new laws, contrary to the spirit of the constitution, and subversive of the rights of the subject. But not only is there this absence of proof, which should preclude us from taking any steps on the subject; in the conduct of ministers there are positive circumstances which give room for suspicion that they do not believe their own assertion. If the proceedings of those meetings were of that notoriety which has been described; if their tendency went to those objects which has been imputed to them; if the tenor of their discourses

discourses was calculated to alienate the affections of those present from his Majesty, and incite their minds to dislike and hatred of the constitution; are there not laws already existing to repress those meetings, and to punish the authors of those discourses? Do not ministers themselves know that there are such laws in existence? I must therefore contend, that ministers were guilty of a most shameful breach of their duty, if they neglected to enforce those laws, and allowed the meetings to go on, while they were aware of their dangerous tendency. Ought they not rather to have repressed their progress by those means which the constitution has put into their hands, than now, by a new law, to seek to take away the lives of those, whom by their neglect, they suffered to advance to that pitch of criminality, which they now contend, renders an alteration of the constitution necessary. I have therefore a right to infer, either that ministers were guilty of a most scandalous breach of duty, or that they do not believe their own assertion, when they impute to the meetings the seditious proceedings, and the dangerous tendency, which they have made the pretext for the present measure. Such then being the only reason which has been urged in support of this Bill, it remains with your lordships to decide whether it is of that weight and authority, which ought to influence you to sanction the passing of a new law, so serious in its nature, and so alarming in its probable consequences. Could ministers, the Duke asked, with truth complain that the remedies to the evils, which they deprecate, and the power of suppressing those illegal principles, so dangerous to the sovereign and the constitution, are not in their hands? It was not that they had not authority to exercise, or that the laws furnished no weapons to destroy the machinations of sedition. Ministers wished to stretch the law beyond its tone. Had they done their duty they would have employed the just authority of the laws in punishing and suppressing sedition, instead of seeking to convict the authors of treasonable crimes. It was a mistaken—it was a fatal idea that the severity of the law was the best protection of a government. It was common for noble lords to go to France for their examples, nor would he there decline to meet them. He would confess that the French revolution was the most sanguinary and most calamitous which the history of mankind ever exhibited: but he would tell their lordships how this disastrous revolution was produced, and he would defy any one who heard him to deny the causes he assigned. It was not effected by the harangues of field preachers, or the discus-

cussions of political clubs [a cry of *hear ! hear !*]. Yes, said his Grace, I repeat, that it was not by the operations of such petty and unequal causes that so mighty an event was occasioned; it was by the profligate manners of a licentious court, which sanctioned by its example, and extended by its influence, a contempt of morals and of decency; a corrupt and unprincipled succession of ministers, who involved the nation in an unjust and unnecessary war—who squandered the resources, and irretrievably ruined the finances of a flourishing nation—who stretched the severity of the law beyond the sufferance of human nature! It was by these causes that the old government of France forfeited the attachment and the support of the people.

In this country, the personal virtues of the monarch constitute a marked difference, the amiable character of the king may banish the licentious immorality of a French court. In the constitution of the cabinet, and the measures of corrupt and wicked ministers, (for corrupt he was warranted to call them, in consequence of their profuse and lavish grants of the publick money) will be found the conduct that contributed to the fall of the French monarchy: a war undertaken, and obstinately prosecuted, without regard to the interest or to the wishes of the people of this country; new places created, and rewards bestowed upon the partizans of their corrupt system; and pensions of almost unparalleled profusion lavished upon the avowed advocates of œconomy; nay, upon the very man who distinguished himself at one time as the advocate of rigid œconomy, but whose conduct, and whose writings had in an eminent degree contributed to create and continue the war, and to cause all its consequent enormous expences. Though happily the finances of this nation have not yet reached that pitch of confusion which hastened the destruction of the French government, how long can that system of prodigality be maintained; or how will a similar catastrophe be avoided? And will severe measures or daring encroachments upon the liberties of the people prevent their dissatisfaction? Gracious God in Heaven! exclaimed the Duke, that any set of men could think such measures could enliven the hopes, or cheer the despair of a starving people. Such attempts may silence the voice of complaint, but they cannot reach the mind that will brood over the injustice; they may restrain and fetter the actions of men, but cannot make them love the constitution, or reconcile them to the government. The smallest knowledge of the human heart
must

must convince ministers of the danger and the folly of their designs.

Before he concluded, the Duke said, he must once more say, that if the laws already in existence were adequate to the punishment of sedition, and the suppression of illegal meetings, ministers were highly culpable if they did not employ the means furnished by the constitution to its protection and could not plead necessity for the introduction and for the enactment of a law which would inevitably overthrow the dearest privileges of the people of England.

Lord Grenville said, in answer, that he should always be ready to defend any measure that he should have the honour to bring forward, from the attacks that might be made on it. The noble Duke had set out with despairing of advancing much new argument against the Bill, and he certainly had urged little or none. He had relied chiefly on denying that he had any parliamentary knowledge of the proceedings of certain societies, and had asked if their lordships knew any thing of them in their character of legislators? To this he must answer again, that the matter was too notorious to be doubted, and, instead of making a question of that, he would ask another. Could any man exist in this metropolis who did not know it? Was the subject brought before their lordships now for the first time? It had been before them long, and debated over and over again; they had on their table a voluminous body of evidence not attempted to be denied or refuted. Had noble lords really forgotten the Reports of a committee of their lordships, and the Resolution the house had come to in consequence. Parties were afterwards prosecuted; and yet the proceedings of the London Corresponding Society were carried on with increased eagerness and boldness. No longer ago than the preceding day there had been a proof of this. These proceedings were inconsistent with the public tranquillity; and he was persuaded their lordships would agree with him they ought to be suppressed. Then came the question, Whether the existing law was adequate to the prevention of such proceedings? The noble Duke had, indeed, nearly answered his own argument upon the point, when he had said they ought to be left to the power of the law, as it now stands, if the law was sufficient for that purpose. To which he would answer, that the present law was notoriously, and even ridiculously, insufficient: it was upon that ground the present Bill was founded; and upon that conviction that their lordships had hitherto entertained this Bill. The noble Duke had asked what proof was there of the connection between the proceedings at the meetings alluded to and the outrage which was offered to his Majesty? The answer was,

the dangerous doctrines held forth at such meetings tended to irritate and inflame the minds of the ignorant and infatuated multitude, and to excite in them a dislike of every form of government, and the conclusion was obvious; to that circumstance was to be imputed all the mischief that had arisen, and the greater mischiefs that were to be dreaded, if means were not taken for their timely prevention. Would any man undertake to prove that they were not connected? He believed nobody would undertake the task. The disseminating such principles must be injurious to the public interest, and therefore the Bill before their lordships provided for the safety of the Monarchy, which was essential to the safety of our constitution. It creates not any crimes, nor did it constitute any new treasons, it only altered the punishment applied to both under the existing laws. In fact, the Bill was calculated not only as a means of preserving the Sovereign, not merely from outrage and attack as brutal and scandalous as that lately attempted, but from an attack more successful and infinitely more lamentable, more horrid and more fatal in its consequences to the country. The noble Duke had alluded to the French revolution, and had thought proper to compare the measures pursued in France by the old court, and those of the administration of which he had the honour to be a member. He had stated that the cause of that revolution in France arose not out of clubs and public meetings, but from a form of government in itself bad, the essence of it being despotic, and from the bad and heedless waste of the finances of the country by a profligate administration. That the French revolution was owing to a government in itself bad he was ready to admit. He would admit also, that not only the dissolute manners and imprudent conduct of the court, but the wasteful expenditure of the public money, and gross inattention to public finance, were undoubtedly the chief causes of that revolution; a revolution so far from being deprecated by the government of this country, was regarded by them in a favourable point of view, as it afforded a prospect of increasing the felicity of a great nation, and of contributing to the continuance of the tranquility which then subsisted throughout Europe. So far it was a revolution that every good man must approve; he had long wished it a happy termination; and happy would it have been had it proceeded on the principle with which it set out. But what brought on all the plunders, assassinations, blood, and horror which afterwards desolated France, was the system of principles maintained by clubs and various public meetings which took place. It was that system, their seditious practices, and the ferocious conduct of successive

five political factions which ruined the country, and disturbed and agitated all Europe. Political assemblies it was well known, had been held there in England which openly professed to imitate the clubs in France. Their publications, their doctrines, and the principles they avowed were similar, and similar consequences were to be apprehended and guarded against; if they were suffered to continue scattering firebrands where there was much combustible matter, their lordships and his majesty's ministers would have to answer to themselves and to their country for the effects that might follow. These clubs and societies proceeded on the Rights of Man, as they were called; rights, which, as they explained them, were incompatible with the existence of law, order, religion, or morality. The best rights that man could enjoy in a state of society, were, protection to property, to person, and to that liberty which could be enjoyed with security only under a government regulated by law.

The *Duke of Bedford* rose to explain. When he had called for proof of the connection between the meetings of the political societies, and the perpetrators of the outrage committed on his Majesty, he did not require that sort of evidence which would be necessary to convict the Corresponding Society; but he thought that in so grave a proceeding, their lordships ought to have had some better authority than bare presumption, or unsupported assertions. Some evidence ought at least to have been given, that sedition was disseminated at those meetings. The noble Lord had referred to evidence which had been two years since laid before their lordships. If the facts upon which the Bill was grounded, equally existed at the time, why was not a similar proceeding then adopted? The noble Lord said, that the Bill did not create new treasons or new crimes, it only went to punish with death, crimes, which, by the existing laws, were liable to severe penalties. Surely these penalties might have been sufficient, if they had been properly enforced, to have checked the progress of these crimes, and prevented the necessity of new punishments. If these penalties had not been enforced, the blame lay with ministers, and their former negligence was now made the ground of their sanguinary policy, which led them to introduce a system of terror into this heretofore free country.

The *Earl of Lauderdale* felt himself called upon to trouble their lordships in consequence of what had fallen from the noble Secretary of State, who had not, in his opinion, by any means answered the objections of his friend the noble Duke. He had been contented with asserting, according to the custom of ministers, that the evil of public and seditious meetings did

exist, and that they were incompatible with the safety of our government. Of this he had given no proof whatever, but had referred to the proof that was given of a plot on a former occasion; of which plot also there had been no real proof—for the persons who had been accused under it and tried at the Old Bailey, had not one of them been found guilty. The noble Secretary of State had complained that the doctrines held and the publications circulated by these meetings necessarily led to endanger the King's life, and therefore the Bill had been brought in to check the progress of such proceedings, and the better to secure his Majesty's person. It was thus ministers had always acted. They always alledged danger to the state, as a pretext for extending their own power, instead of using the power which they already had with vigour and with energy. He was willing to admit that discontent among the people did exist in a considerable degree, but he must contend that it did not arise from the cause which the noble Secretary of State alledged. It was not from disloyalty or dislike of the person of his Majesty that these complaints came, on the contrary, he was beloved by his subjects. It was from the conduct of his Majesty's advisers; and under that view of the subject, he would say, it would be strange indeed if the people did not complain. He would go further; he would say they ought to meet, and energetically oppose this Bill; and he had no doubt it was under that idea that they met the preceding day in a manner that had given so much offence to the noble Secretary of State. God forbid that the Bill before their lordships should ever pass into a law, the people, he was satisfied, would abhor it, the more especially as they understood from the noble Secretary of State himself, that this Bill was only one of a suite of measures, which ministers had in contemplation. It was intended only to feel the pulse of the people, a mere experiment to try their temper, and to learn whether they are prepared to submit to despotism. In that view the people said, and under that impression they would detect it; from the sample which the noble Secretary had offered, he believed he might save himself, and his colleagues, the trouble of bringing any more of the same sort of goods to market.

It was curious and amusing, to hear the noble Secretary declare, that the great object of the Bill was, a further security for his majesty's person. In order to strengthen their own hands and set controul at defiance, ministers had made use of the infamous and savage attack on his majesty, to introduce Bills which went to destroy the liberties of the subject, by annihilating the principles of the constitution. With regard to the personal safety of his majesty, they had been as torpid
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and as regardless in the hour of danger, as they had shewn themselves on every other important occasion. Apprized as they confessed they had been of the insult offered to his majesty in his way to the house, to fulfil one of the most important functions of the royal authority, how had ministers conducted themselves? They had suffered him to return without additional guards, or any precaution whatever to prevent a repetition of the insult, and by such impotent and negligent conduct, they had exposed his majesty to still greater danger than he had before experienced. Had he had the honour of attending his majesty on that day, a dagger should have pierced his breast, before any ruffian should have reached the person of his sovereign. This he mentioned to shew the little care which ministers had manifested for the king's person; a plea which they now made use of, for offering the present Bill to their lordships. Their real one was as he had already stated, to encrease their own power, and to conceal, if possible, the shame and confusion which they had brought upon themselves, by the madness with which they had prosecuted the war. They knew that unless they could prevent the people from meeting and uttering their complaints, their own disgrace would follow, and therefore, under the pretext of providing for the safety of the king, they were endeavouring to provide for their own: If the Bill passed, the most valuable part of the constitution would be gone. Enough might indeed be left of it to enable ministers to swell their speeches, with pompous epithets upon its excellence, but nothing to swell the heart of an honest Englishman with pride and joy! Instead of endeavouring to correct their errors, ministers manifested a disposition to silence the people who complained of them. Was it wonderful that the people should complain? At what did they complain? This had well been illustrated by the noble Duke, who had spoken so eloquently in the debate. The people were insulted by seeing the most shameful negligence of their interests, by seeing ministers attempting to make it criminal to complain, by seeing the most profligate waste of the public money, by seeing the most provoking insults offered to them, in the vast sums that were lavished upon courtiers, and court dependents; by seeing pensions granted daily to apostates; a pension, for instance, and a large one too, to a man who was once the champion of economy, but whose chief merit with ministers were that of having attacked the principles of freedom, and of having contributed very considerably to involve us in the present war. Mr. Burke, the man he meant, for why should he not name him, was to have an enormous pension, for endeavouring

endeavouring to inculcate doctrines, that tended to extinguish the principles of freedom. It was upon this idea of the success such doctrines had met with in a certain quarter, no doubt, that a right reverend and learned prelate had founded his political creed, and thought proper to declare, that the mass of the people had nothing to do with the laws but to obey them, [Here the *Bishop of Rochester* cried *hear! hear! hear!*] he heard the vociferation of the learned prelate, he was perfectly welcome to do so, that he might enjoy unenvied all the praise that was due to the worthy maxim; he believed he was the only man in the house who could have used it; he believed that no *temporal* Lord could have soared so high; be that as it might, there could be no doubt but that his majesty's ministers must have relished it extremely, because it exactly fell in with their own principles. Indeed it was not wonderful that the reverend and learned prelate should have expressed himself so boldly, as it was always remarked by those who were best acquainted with the human character, that converts are the most violent, and the most prone to run into extremes. The learned prelate was willing to atone in parliament for his conduct before his voice could be heard in it. He had formerly entertained different sentiments, he had attended, as he understood, a meeting that was held in the Borough some years ago for the purpose of obtaining a Parliamentary Reform, but the opinions of bishops as well as of other men varied and changed with circumstances, and therefore the right reverend prelate could do no less than read his recantation. The right reverend prelate had, however, not very improperly, at the same time, confessed his ignorance of law. Indeed without any thing more than a general knowledge of law, and some acquaintance with political treatises, he might have learnt that the people had something else to do with the laws than merely to obey them, that they had a right to discuss their propriety, to consider their justice, and when they felt them oppressive to petition against them, to complain of them as grievances, and to pray the parliament to repeal them. These were acknowledged constitutional doctrines, doctrines laid down by every writer of authority on the constitution, in almost every reign of our history. The right reverend prelate appeared, however, to have made a convert of the noble Secretary, whose ideas of the rights of the people, pretty much corresponded with those of the reverend prelate. What, he asked, did the noble Secretary mean by stigmatizing with every term of reproach a peaceable assembly, convened for the purpose of considering a Bill, they regarded as an infringement of their just and lawful

lawful privileges? Perhaps the noble Secretary borrowed his idea from another speech which he had once heard, and took offence at the tribunes which were erected in sight of rising villages, and smoking brick-kilns. With regard to the free discussion of parliamentary proceedings, was there ever, a common turnpike Bill brought into parliament, without being discussed in some meeting, more or less numerous, according to its importance? If the privilege of political discussion was allowed on matters of trivial and partial concern, how much more ought it to be permitted on subjects of important and general interest? Perhaps, the noble Secretary was offended at the recent proof that had been offered him of the remains of the ancient spirit of Englishmen, which it has been the object of his whole administration to crush. They had been told that misdemeanors and seditions were frequent and alarming, but were not the existing laws of the country sufficient to punish and repress them? Where was the proof of that spirit of sedition which they had excited for the destruction of the constitution, or where was the proof of the exertions of ministers to repel its assaults? Was there one person whom they suspected, whom they had not prosecuted? Had all the laws in existence for the prevention and punishment of treason and sedition been administered? Had every exertion which could be made been used; and after all, was the evil found to remain? If these questions could be answered in the affirmative, then something like a case was made out; but if, on the contrary, no exertion had been used to put the existing laws in execution against offenders, it was the magistrates who were entrusted with the administration of justice, and not the secret provisions of the law, on whom we were to charge the evils of which they complain. He knew, that ministers had on one occasion exerted themselves, through the medium of the courts, to try how far the law of treason would go. Their malice was however disappointed by their ignorance, and because they could not bring their wishes to meet the law, they wanted to frame the law so as to meet their wishes. Every part of their conduct he said, proved the incapacity of ministers; and the manner in which they had acted manifested that incapacity in the whole conduct of this war. There appeared to be an intimate connection between the operations of their military and civil policy. In the course of the war, they have talked mightily of armaments and expeditions, while their ships were lying inactive in port, and the troops were half dead before their destination was known; with regard to their much boasted expedition and armament for the West Indies, the ships

ships were still lying in port, and probably would not sail these three weeks; and now they cry out loudly of sedition, while we neither hear of any evidence being lodged against offenders, nor punishment inflicted upon the offences. His noble Friend, the noble Duke he said, had traced, in a strain of admirable eloquence, the connection between the circumstances which gave birth to the revolution in France, and the present situation of this country; and the only observation which he would make, in addition to what his noble Friend had said, was, that when any government perseveres in a system of extravagance and oppression, means will always be found out by the people to get rid of their oppressors. The ministers of this country might go on for a time in the ruinous measures which they have adopted, but he warned them of the danger of driving a once free and high spirited people, to those rash and violent steps which despair alone can dictate. He concluded with expressing his distrust of any exertion that he could make, being able to convince their lordships of the injustice and impolicy of the Bill, though he had the consolation of having done his duty, and been instrumental in meliorating some of its clauses. The indecent haste and contempt of public opinion, which ministers had particularly manifested in the course of their proceedings on the present momentous business, was most scandalous and shameful. He concluded with declaring, that he hoped that the spirit of the people would shew itself throughout every part of the kingdom, because he was persuaded that nothing else would save the state from ruin.

Lord Grenville said, he should not have risen to offer a single word in answer to the noble Earl, who spoke last, had he not mentioned the case of Mr. Burke. To that he must answer, that he was proud to boast of the part he had taken in recommending the pension of that gentleman, and was ready to take his share of responsibility for it. He was glad to have the opportunity of avowing it; and of asserting in that publick manner, that a publick reward was never more merited for the most eminent and important services. No man could boast of services to this country, and to mankind at large more meritorious; and he was persuaded that the publick would feel for that great character a lasting gratitude, for having opposed the shield of reason, and sound argument to defend the wise establishments of our ancestors in common, with all the great men of former times, against the daring inroads of the most pernicious and dangerous principles and doctrines ever broached by folly, enthusiasm and madness.

The

The *Bishop of Rochester* came forward, as soon as the Earl of Lauderdale sat down, and said, after the pointed manner in which the noble Earl had been pleased personally to allude to him, and to what he had said on a former night, he must intrude upon their lordships for a few minutes indulgence; how far it was regular to advert to a former debate, it was not for him to decide, but as he had been so pointedly attacked; he trusted their lordships would favour him with their attention while he endeavoured to explain. It had been stated that he had confessed his ignorance of law. That was a mistake: he imputed no such ignorance to himself. As a part of general learning, without pretending to any knowledge of technical distinctions, he understood something of law. When compared to those who had made that science their particular study, it was surely no reproach to be unlearned. Upon general knowledge of law, he did not affect to state himself to be inferior to other noble Lords; certainly not inferior to the noble Duke, who on a former night rebuked him for saying that the mass of the people had nothing to do with the laws but to obey them. That maxim he had not delivered without accompanying it with some expressed reserve, and it must be other arguments than those, which he had heard from the noble Earl that evening, that could induce him to retract the sentiment. To that sentiment adopted upon the fullest conviction and deliberation, he firmly adhered. The noble Earl, said the bishop, alluding to what I formerly advanced, has said that it is the duty of the subject not only to obey the laws, but also to study them. And who is there that can dispute with him the truth of this declaration? Who can more cordially join him in that assertion than myself? But it becomes a legislator in particular to study the law in its different connections and bearings; and let me tell the noble Lord, that I should consider myself unworthy of the situation I hold in this house, if I neglected that study. I therefore freely admit, that it is the people's right to study the law, as much as it is their duty to obey it. I as readily grant they have a right to state their grievances, and by all lawful and constitutional means, to endeavour to obtain a repeal of such laws as appear to them to be partial or oppressive. Admitting this, I must, under these restrictions, repeat, that the individual has nothing to do with the laws, but to obey them. Where any law particularly affects any number of individuals, it was undoubtedly the right of such individuals to meet to discuss its merits or its demerits, and to come to a resolution either to support or oppose, by reasonable means, such law; to pray the legislature that such a

law, as shall appear to them to be good, may be enacted; or that such, as may appear to be bad, may be repealed: To express their sense of it in sober and decent terms, but that after this was done, and the legislature had decided, the people had nothing to do with the law but to obey it. This reserve he had before expressed, and had mentioned the Snuff, and Glove Tax, as instances, where free discussion was not only justifiable, but called for. By this maxim, thus qualified, he would submit to die under the *guillotine* if it were necessary. The noble Earl on a preceding evening had said, with that wit and pleasantry, which he could relish even when directed against himself, that the sentiment he had expressed, would have better become the mouth of a mumi, than that of an English prelate. The sentiment he had promulged, so far from appearing to him to be a bad one, seemed applicable only to such a free state as ours. In Constantinople no man was called upon to obey the laws, because the miserable inhabitants of that city had no laws to obey, but were forced to submit to the despotic will, the fluctuating caprice and the momentary whim of their tyrant. Neither was the sentiment applicable to Geneva or any Republic, because in a democracy, the people must bend to the sudden violence and rash decrees of their popular assemblies. But with us, where the law was supreme, he would say again, under the former qualification, that the people have nothing to do with the law but to obey it. With regard to the Bill before the house, he thought it a wise and a just one. It had been objected to it, that it created new crimes; with more consistency and truth it might be said, that it applied new punishments to old offences. It had been said, that the law as it stood was sufficient to all that was required. The fact was undeniably otherwise. The licentiousness of the press, could not be checked without a new law. Was it not notorious, that men who had been confined for libels, lived in prison luxuriously on the profits of fresh libels. The pillory, was so far from operating as a punishment, that to be set in it was a stepping-stone to glory, it was considered as the post of honour, and the sure road to fame and fortune, ever since Williams stood in the pillory, for publishing the North Briton, No. 45. It was therefore ardently coveted by the advocates and agents of libellers, and atheists.

The noble Earl had mentioned an anecdote of being present at a meeting for Parliamentary Reform; he declared he did not recollect, to what the noble Earl alluded; if the noble Earl would

would have the goodness to tell him when and where, he would acknowledge it, for he believed there were but few of the actions of his life which he should wish to conceal. He recollected no such thing; nor was he much a frequenter of public meetings. Exclusive of recent meetings necessarily convened for the relief of the poor, at which he had assisted, the only publick meeting he recollected having been present at, was one about 14 years ago, and then he did attend, as he remembered, for the purpose of supporting a gentleman at an election for a member for Surrey, in opposition to a ministerial candidate; whom he did not think a fit person to be chosen. The Bishop concluded his able speech, with returning his thanks to their lordships for their indulgence.

The *Duke of Bedford* said, that feeling himself particularly called upon, he must say that from the explanation which they had just heard from the noble prelate of his extraordinary declaration on a former night, there seemed to be so much variation from what he conceived really to have been said, and that had been guarded and qualified with so much reserve and exception, that he considered the objectionable ground of the reverend prelate's sentiment in a great measure removed, though the impression of the maxim, as first broached was not altered. He, for one, had not doubted the learned prelate's knowledge of the law, indeed his speech of that evening proved that he understood, and knew how to apply it with advantage. If the noble prelate had persisted in asserting in an unqualified manner what he conceived him to have advanced in the preceding debate, he certainly would have moved that the noble prelate's words should have been taken down, and should have thought any man who held such unconstitutional doctrine ought to be himself placed on the "stepping-stone to glory, and in the path of honour."

The *Earl of Lauderdale* coincided in the sentiments of his noble friend, and was glad to see that the noble prelate had not so far forgotten his duty, as to disdain to endeavour to make some explanation of what the house must think was at least inadvertently uttered. With regard to what he had said of the reverend prelate having been present at a publick meeting, he had not mentioned the fact loosely or idly; he could assure the reverend prelate he spoke from authority, having heard the circumstance from the person who sat next to him at the meeting to which he alluded.

The *Earl of Abington* delivered his sentiments in a desultory and eccentric manner against the Bill. His lordship said, he should give his most hearty opposition to the Bill, be-

cause he thought it an unnecessary infringement upon the liberty of the people, which he would never suffer if he could help it. He was one of the guardians of the people, and had been a faithful one, he had never intrigued with any party. He took notice of what had been said of the character of the Earl of Clarendon in a former debate, and declared, he had an extract of no great length to read to their lordships from a work, the author of which drew that testimony in a very different point of view, from that in which the two noble lords (Earl of Mansfield and Lord Grenville) had placed him. In the first place he had to observe, that Lord Clarendon was a very superstitious fellow, and believed in ghosts; but he would read a curious dialogue out of this book about him. His lordship then took a book from his pocket and read a passage, in which Lord Clarendon's character was very freely dealt with. Being asked (by the Marquis Townshend) who the author was, he said, he really did not know, as he purchased the work at a stall; like the bishops the author was styled. Before he proceeded to read the next passage, he wished to observe, that he thought the old doctrine of passive obedience and non resistance was revived: he was in hopes it had been quite buried since James the Second's reign. He wished to ask the reverend prelate, (Bp. of Rochester) whether *vox populi* was not *vox Dei*. He would prove it was, and that God Almighty always inspired the people upon such occasions, and would do so still: he would prove this by authors as old as Methusalem. He then read a page or two more, and having finished reading, his lordship said, with regard to Mr. Burke, he had himself written against some of his doctrine, but he would never answer him, because what he said was unanswerable. If the Bill passed, he said, resistance to it might be deemed rebellion, but if the compact settled by the Bill of Rights were broken, it might happen that the government might be in a state of rebellion against the people. His lordship added, that the arguments that he had heard that day, appeared to him to be calculated to enforce the exploded principle of passive obedience and non-resistance, and that all who preached and maintained such doctrine, whether bishops or lay peers, temporal or spiritual lords, were damned beyond all possibility of redemption by revolutionary principles. He said, he was not prepared to discuss the Bill, or he would have come with a philippic against it, as he was sure he could have urged arguments that would have convinced their lordships it ought not to pass.

The Bishop of Rochester said in explanation, that under the

reserve in which he had explained his meaning on a former night, he would be ready at any time to re-assert his opinion. He owned, he had not perused the treatises of writers as old as Methusalem, nor did he believe any authors so old had treated of the rights of British subjects under the constitution of this country, but he had read enough of the works of writers who were not quite so old, to know that freedom of discussion of all matters capable of being deemed matters of grievance was an Englishman's peculiar privilege.

The question being put, that the Bill do pass, * the house divided.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Mr. Ryder moved for leave to put off the order of the day for the house to resolve itself into a committee to consider further upon the high price of corn to Monday following, on which day the Select Committee expected to be able to make its report. In the mean time he was authorised to say that that committee had decided upon one point, namely; "The trade is to be left open to merchants to import corn from any foreign country for the supply of our markets without any interference on the part of government, and a bounty will be given."

Mr.

* *The following is an authentic Copy of the Bill, as it passed the House of Lords, and was sent down by their Lordships to the House of Commons.*

An Act for the safety and preservation of his Majesty's person and government against treasonable and seditious practices and attempts.

WE, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Lords spiritual and temporal, and Commons of Great Britain, in this present Parliament assembled, duly considering the daring outrages offered to your Majesty's most sacred person, in your passage to and from your parliament at the opening of this present session, and also the continued attempts of wicked and evil disposed persons to disturb the tranquillity of this your Majesty's kingdom, particularly by the multitude of pamphlets and speeches daily printed, published, and dispersed, with unremitting industry, and with a transcendent boldness, in contempt of your Majesty's royal person and dignity, and tending to the overthrow of the laws, government, and happy constitution of these realms, have judged that it is become necessary to provide a further remedy against all such treasonable and seditious practices and attempts: We, therefore, calling to mind the good and wholesome provisions which

Mr. *Hussey* said, he had given notice that he should bring forward a motion respecting corn as that day, but the object being in part obtained, what he meant to urge was unnecessary.

The orders of the day for the house to resolve itself into a Committee of Ways and Means and a Committee of Supply were put off till Monday following.

• The house then resolved itself into Committees on the Land-tax, the Malt Bill, and the Manufactory of Starch, when the various amendments were read and agreed to, and notice given that the reports would be received on Monday following. In

have at different times been made by the wisdom of parliament for the averting such dangers, and more especially for the security and preservation of the persons of the sovereigns of these realms.

Do most humbly beseech your Majesty, That it may be enacted, and be it enacted by the King's most excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords spiritual and temporal and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, that if any person or persons whatsoever, after the day of the passing of this act, during the natural life of our most gracious sovereign Lord the King, (whom Almighty God preserve and bless with a long and prosperous reign, and until the end of the next session of parliament after a demise of the crown, shall, within the realm or with uncompassionate malice, intent, devil, or contrivance, or destruction, or any bodily harm tending to death or destruction, maim, wounding, imprisonment, or restraint of the person of the said our sovereign Lord the King, his heirs and successors, or to deprive or depair him or them from the title, honour, or kingly name, of the imperial crown of this realm, or of any other of his Majesty's dominions or countries, or to levy war against his Majesty, his heirs and successors, within this realm or without, or to invade or stir up any foreigner or stranger with force to invade this realm or any other his Majesty's dominions or countries, under the obedience of his Majesty, his heirs and successors, and such compassing, imagining, inventions, devices, or intentions or any of them, shall expressly, utter, or declare, (by any printing, writing, or other overt act or deed,) being legally convicted thereof, upon the oaths of two lawful and credible witnesses, upon trial or otherwise convicted or attainted by due course of law, then every such person and persons so as aforesaid offending shall be deemed, declared, and adjudged, to be a traitor and traitors, and shall suffer pains of death, and also lose and forfeit as in cases of high treason.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That if any person or persons within that part of Great Britain called England, at any time from and after the day of the passing of this act, during his Majesty's life, and until the end of the next session of parliament after the demise of the crown, shall manifestly and advisedly, by writing, printing, preaching, or other speaking, express, publish, utter, or declare, any words sentences or other thing or things, to incite or stir up the people to hatred or contempt of the person of his Majesty, his heirs or successors, or the government and constitution of this realm, as by Law established, then every such person and persons, being thereunto legally convicted, shall be liable to such punishment as may by law be inflicted in cases of high misdemeanours, and if any person or persons shall, after being so convicted, offend a second time, and be thereupon convicted, before any commission of oyer and terminer, or gaol delivery, or in his Majesty's Court of King's Bench, such person or persons may, on such second conviction, be adjudged, at the discretion of the Court, either to be banished this realm, or to be transported to such place,

In a committee to prevent the making of low wines and spirits from wheat and other articles of grain, &c. and to prohibit the working of distilleries for a limited time Mr. *Hussy* wished to extend the prohibition to an article consumed chiefly by the poor, *molasses*. In consequence of the prohibition upon other materials for distillation, this article had been so much used for that purpose, that it had risen to nearly double its usual price; that is to say, from 18 shillings to 50 the cwt. or by retail from two-pence halfpenny to sixpence *per lb.* He was aware that he could not now make any motion for the prohibition of molasses, but he suggested it in the committee that some enquiry might hereafter be made, and he hoped the prohibition would ensue.

Mr. *Rose* said, undoubtedly, no motion could be made, because it would be irregular; if it even were regular, he should have been induced to object to it, because the consumption of the article in question, as used in the distilleries, was of more importance to the revenue than the prohibition could be advantageous to the poor. Enquiries had already been made concerning it, and it had been found that treacle was not used

as shall be appointed by his Majesty for the transportation of offenders, for such term as the court may appoint, not exceeding seven years.

Provided always, That no person or persons, by virtue of this present act, shall incur any of the penalties herein before mentioned, unless he or they be prosecuted within three months next after the offence committed, and the prosecution brought to trial within the same term, or sessions, or that which shall next ensue after filing the information, or the indictment being found, unless the court in which the same is depending shall, on special ground stated by motion in open court, think fit to enlarge the time for the trial thereof, or unless the defendant shall be prosecuted to an outlawry.

Provided always, and be it enacted, That no person or persons shall be indicted, arraigned, condemned, convicted, or attainted, for any of the treasons or offences aforesaid, unless the same offender or offenders be thereof accused by the testimony of two lawful and credible witnesses, upon oath, which witness, at the time of the said offender or offenders arraigned, shall be brought in person before him or them, face to face, and shall openly avow and maintain, upon oath what they have to say against him or them concerning the treason or offence contained in the said indictment, unless the party or parties arraigned shall willingly, and without violence, confess the same.

Provided also, and be it further enacted, That all and every person or persons who at any time be accused, or indicted, or prosecuted, for any offence made or declared to be treason by this act, shall be entitled to the benefit of the act of parliament, made in the seventh year of his late Majesty King William the third, intitled, "An act for relieving of trials in cases of treason, and murder of treason," and also to the provisions made by another act of parliament, passed in the seventh year of her late Majesty Queen Anne, intitled, "An act for improving the trial of treasons."

Provided also, and be it enacted that nothing in this act contained shall extend, or be construed to extend, to prevent or affect any prosecution by information or indictment at the common law, for any offence within the provisions of this act, unless the party shall have been first prosecuted under this act.

to any considerable quantities by the poor. Future enquiries should, however, be made, and if it could be proved that the fact were otherwise, it might then be proper to take it into their consideration, and bring in a separate Bill.

Mr. *Thomson* suspected that the Honourable Gentleman opposite, in his benevolent regard for the poor, had overlooked another very necessary object. He alluded to the trade of the country, which, by the extension of such prohibitions would become so much depressed that the poor must ultimately be far greater sufferers. Molasses, he observed, was not a necessary but a luxury of life, and therefore ought not to be included in the present scarcity.

Mr. *Hussey* said, he merely wished to keep it at its old price, as it was an article consumed almost entirely by the poor.

Mr. *Rise* denied this, because it had always been used in distillation to a certain extent, though its consumption for that purpose might be now encreased in consequence of the prohibition upon other materials. He remarked, however, that the molasses used in the distillation was not merely the refuse from the sugar houses in this country, but a considerable quantity was imported from the West-Indies. If, therefore, the consumption encreased, the markets would soon rebound by an increase of the importation, and consequently many merchants now probably engaged in a speculation for importing molasses from the West-Indies, would abandon their plan, if they entertained any apprehensions of its prohibition.

The House was then returned, and notice given that the report of the committees would be received on Monday.

Mr. *Dent* gave notice, that he would on Monday next move for leave to bring in a Bill for a more regular and quicker mode of carrying writs up into the hands of the returning officer.

The Bill to prevent the exportation of candles and soap was read a second time, and will be committed on Monday.

Mr. *Habart* brought in the report of the committee on a Bill for allowing the importation of certain sorts of silk in ships from any port at amity with his Majesty, when the Bill was read a third time and ordered to be engrossed.

Adjourned to Monday.

PROTEST

Against the passing of the new Treason Bill in the House of Lords.

Dissentient,

I, Because we conceive this Bill to be founded on a false pretence. It recites a daring outrage on his Majesty's person, (which we feel with the utmost horror) and purports to provide

vide further remedies against such practices, whilst in reality it affords no additional security whatever to his Majesty's person, and leaves us to regret a deep and irreparable injury to the laws and constitution of our country, by making the compassing, imagining, inventing, and devising the levying War a substantive treason; thereby departing in a most dangerous and unjustifiable manner from the statute of the twenty-fifth of Edward III. the salutary provisions of which we cannot be tempted to abandon, by the example of temporary statutes, whose doubtful policy stands in opposition to a law, in which the wisdom of our ancestors has been so repeatedly recognized by the legislature, and so strongly confirmed by the permanent experience of its benefits.

II. Because the free discussion of the administration of government in all its branches, by writing, speaking, and meeting for the purpose of representing grievances to any of the three branches of the legislature, has afforded the best protection to the liberties of the people, and is the undoubted inherent right of Englishmen. Yet this Bill erects into a high misdemeanor, the exercise of this most valuable privilege, and inflicts, in certain cases, the pains and penalties of transportation for the offences which it creates, a punishment in the case of misdemeanors, thus generally constituted, as unprecedented in the history of our laws, as it is unnecessary and unconstitutional.

III. Because the extension of the treason laws, and the creating new misdemeanors, is an alarming encroachment on the security of the subject, and affords no additional protection to his Majesty's person and government; for the state of every king, ruler, and governor of any realm, dominion, or commonalty, standeth and consisteth more assured by the love and favour of the subjects towards their sovereign, ruler, and governor, than in the dread and fear of those laws with rigorous pains and extreme punishments, which have at all times disgraced our code. History, however, shews us, that by succeeding legislatures, our statute book has, with every mark of generous indignation, been uniformly cleared of these temporary and unconstitutional excrescences, a circumstance which we now regard as a solemn warning against creating new and unheard of misdemeanors, or altering the treason laws of our country.

(Signed)

BEDFORD,
DERBY,
LAUDERDALE.

MINORITY.

On Mr. Pitt's Motion for a Bill to prevent all Publick and Private Meetings for Political Discussion.

Aubrey, Sir John
Barclay, George
Bouverie, Hon. Ed.
Byng, George
Couttenay, John
Crespiigny, C. C.
Curwen, J. C.
Eskine, Hon. Thomas
Fitzpatrick, Gen.
Fox, Charles James
Francis, Phillip
Halhed, N. B.
Hart, James
Harrison, John
Hussey, William
Jeykyl, J.
Jervoise, J. C.
Lambton, W. H.
Lechmere, Ed.
Lemon, Sir Wm.
M'Leod, Gen.
Martin, James
Milbank, Ralph

Milner, Sir William
North, Dudley
Peirce, Henry
Phillips, J. C.
Plumer, William
Robinson, Morris
Ruffel, Lord William
St. John, Hon. St. A.
Scudamore, John
Smith, General
Smith, William
Spencer, Lord Robert
Stanley, John Thomas
Sturt, C.
Tarleton, General
Thomplon, Thomas
Weston, C. C.
Whitbread, S. Jun.
Winnington, Sir Edward
TELLERS.
R. B. Sheridan, Esq.
Charles Grey, Esq.
In all 44.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

MONDAY, *November 16.*

A message from the Lords informed the House that their lordships had passed "an Act for the safety and preservation of "his Majesty's person and government against treasonable and "seditious practices and attempts," and desired the concurrence of the Commons in the same.

A Bill for the relief and maintenance of the poor, was read a first and second time, and ordered to be printed.

TRANSIT OF WRITS.

Mr. *Dent* rose, and in a few prefatory words, shewing, that the Bill he proposed to bring in would not affect any other acts of parliament, but was rather tended to enforce them, moved for leave to bring in a Bill for the more expeditious and regular conveyance of writs issued for the election of members to serve in parliament; when leave was granted, and Mr. *Dent*, Colonel *Stanley*, and Mr. *Hobart*, were ordered to prepare and bring it in.

Mr. *Hobart* brought up the reports of the committee on the land-tax, malt-bill, and manufactory of starch, with the amendments, when the Bills were ordered to be read a third time the next day, and engrossed.

Mr.

Mr. *Rose* presented the estimates of Upper Canada, Nova-Scotia, Dominica, &c. which were ordered to lie on the table.

The Bill for the importation of a certain sort of silk in ships from any port in America with his Majesty, was passed, and Mr. Hobart ordered to carry it up to the lords.

CORN,

Mr. *Ryder* brought up the report of the select committee upon the high price of corn. The report stated that, having read the evidence given before his Majesty's privy council, the committee proceeded to consider the information of the members of that House, to examine the evidence taken by the lords, together with an account of the produce of the year in the several counties, as delivered by Sir John Sinclair from the Board of Agriculture, and to take such statements as were given by the various members who composed that committee from their own personal knowledge. It stated also that some returns had been received from the *Custodes Rotularum*, in consequence of the circular letter which had been sent to them, but that the committee had not yet received a sufficient quantity to make a satisfactory report upon that subject. Upon the whole, however, it appeared that, except in the article of wheat, the crops had been abundant; so much so, indeed, that, by the proper use and mixture of them, some great alleviation for the present scarcity might be made. The committee had also proceeded to examine persons in the corn trade, from whom they understood that on account of a less plentiful harvest this year, and the great demand in the last year upon the old stock for foreign markets, the price of grain was so high in America, the Mediterranean, and the northern parts of Europe, that it was doubtful whether any adequate supply could be depended on. In consequence of this information, the committee considered whether the purchase of corn in any of those places should be left entirely to government, or to individual merchants, as government had still a great quantity to dispose of. It was, at last, deemed most eligible to leave the trade perfectly open, without any interference on the part of government, and to grant a bounty, and many merchants accordingly declared their readiness to embark. The bounty which the committee has proposed to give, is twenty shillings upon every quarter imported from the Mediterranean, and fifteen shillings upon every barrel, reckoning 44lb. to the quarter, and 196lb. to the barrel, avoirdupoise, until 300,000 quarters shall be imported. The reason for allowing this high bounty upon corn imported from

the mediterranean, is in consequence of the high price which the vessels trading to that quarter pay for freight and insurance, together with the obligation they are under of conveying out ballast. The bounty upon corn imported from America, and the northern parts of Europe, is fixed at fifteen shillings the quarter and ten shillings the barrel, of the same standard as before, until 500,000 quarters shall be imported; and as Indian corn and Indian meal may, at this time, be substituted, the committee have agreed to grant a bounty of five shillings per quarter, and three shillings per barrel, upon those articles, of the standard above-mentioned, imported into this country before the 31st of August 1796, or until 500,000 quarters are imported. The committee has also received some accounts of the deficiency of rye, but it was not yet authorised to make a report upon it. The committee concluded its report, by observing that they had adopted such measures as appeared to them capable of affording the largest supply with the utmost expedition, and in the most unexceptionable manner; that supplies, however, from foreign markets were not to be depended upon, and that it would be necessary in the mean time, to enforce the strictest economy in the consumption of wheat, and the wisest precautions and experiments in substituting other articles to lessen that consumption. Upon these principles it would extend its enquiries, and report from time to time as opportunity should serve.

The report* was ordered to lie upon the table, and copies of it to be printed.

Upon a motion of Mr. *Ryder*, the order of the day was then read for the house to resolve itself into a committee of the whole house, to consider further of the high price of corn, which was put off till the Wednesday following.

AN ACT FOR THE SAFETY AND PRESERVATION OF HIS MAJESTY'S PERSON AND GOVERNMENT AGAINST TREASONABLE AND SEDITIOUS PRACTICES AND ATTEMPTS.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* then moved, that the act which the lords had sent for their concurrence, entitled "an Act for the safety and preservation of his Majesty's person," be read a first time.

Mr. *Sheridan* hoped that if it was read a first time it would be printed before the second reading took place; in the mean time, from the general notoriety of the Bill, he conceived himself bound to oppose the first reading of it, and should accordingly take the sense of the house upon it.

* Vide Appendix for a copy of the Report itself.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* was not surprised at this extraordinary opposition in the first stage of the Bill, because he knew the Honourable Gentleman was in the habit of arguing against it out of doors. He told the Honourable Gentleman, however, that he should move for the second reading to take place on Thursday.

A long conversation ensued, upon the point of form in reading a Bill a first time without previous notice, from which strangers were excluded, when the house divided upon Mr. Sheridan's motion.

While the strangers were excluded, a conversation took place, in the course of which Mr. Whitbread refuted a charge, contained in a calumnious anonymous paragraph which appeared in some of the morning papers of yesterday, purporting that Mr. Whitbread and Mr. Plumer had opposed the loyal address proposed and carried at the county meeting held at Hertford on Saturday last. Mr. Plumer said, he could not subscribe to the Address carried on that day, because it contained a calumny upon a certain description of persons, charging them with a conspiracy which produced the outrage upon the king: Mr. Whitbread said they had proposed and supported an address containing warm expressions of loyalty and affection to his Majesty upon his happy escape, but abstaining from fixing the heavy charge of having originated that detestable act on any part of his Majesty's subjects without proof.

<i>Ayes</i>	-	-	26
<i>Noes</i>	-	-	170
<i>Majority</i>			144

Upon the motion for the second reading of the Bill, the house again divided.

<i>Ayes</i>	-	-	251
<i>Noes</i>	-	-	25
<i>Majority</i>			226

Lord Eardley remarked on the impropriety of a public meeting having been held by some of the opposition on Sunday, on the subject of the Bills now pending in Parliament, and observed, that in this, as well as in other respects, he was sorry to see too great a resemblance to French principles.

Mr. *Sheridan* replied, that the advertisement giving an account of the meeting had, no date to it, and that it might be therefore on any other day, as far as appeared.

Sir

Sir *William Young* remarked also on the want of reverence for the sabbath, which such a meeting implied.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, he did not mean to deny that the meeting was on the Sunday; but observed, that the case was urgent; that care also was taken not to drink the toasts after dinner, with those accompaniments to the toasts which were usual, and that the utmost decorum was observed. He also said, the object of the meeting was to prepare a hand-bill, in order to discourage riot. He assured the House, that he was by no means a person who was apt to fail in respect for the faith or profession of the people of this or any other religion or country. He added, that the date to the advertisement was purposely left out, as the meeting were sensible that it ought not to be announced to the public, as held on a Sunday, and ought not to be drawn into a precedent.

Mr. *Grey*, Mr. *Fox*, Mr. *Lambton*, and Mr. *Sheridan*, opposed the Bill, some on the ground of wishing to bring on first the motion for a committee to inquire into the circumstances of the late attack on his Majesty.

Mr. *Ryder*, Mr. *H. Addington*, and the *Chancellor of the Exchequer*, supported the motion for the first reading of it, and urged the indecency of opposing in the first stage, a Bill, of which all that they knew at present was, that it was a Bill for the further security of his Majesty's person, whose life had been lately in so much danger; and a Bill, which also was recommended to them by the House of Lords who had passed it.

After which Mr. *Sheridan* asked, whether such a necessity did exist as justified the Bill in question? If this necessity did exist, then such a declaration went exactly to this point, that if proof was attainable, proof should be given. For his part, however, he had heard of no satisfactory proof for recurring to so violent a measure, nor had any satisfactory proof been yet adduced. Proofs were absolutely necessary, and ministers were bound to furnish them, as the *onus probandi* clearly lay with them. Before the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, ministers had condescended to act with some little decency, with some deliberation, and had accordingly moved for the appointment of a Committee of Enquiry, upon the report of which committee they afterwards proceeded. If the report were necessary then, it was more indispensable at present, for upon what possible principle could they call upon the members of that house to assent to the strong measures which were then offered them, unless they established an absolute necessity for such resources, and confirmed it by evidence? He would not stoop to the proclamation as a proof,
he

he considered that proclamation as the declaration of the minister. What authority then was there for the introduction of this Bill? what inducement for its adoption? The evidence sent down from the House of Lords, and the address of congratulation to his majesty for his escape, were by no means sufficient, without examining a single witness, the house had been content to take the matter as it stood, and had joined in the address of the other house, without further enquiry. To this he did not object, so far as it related to the address alone; on the contrary, he readily concurred; but did any man think that the evidence, taken in the House of Lords, vague and contradictory as it was in every part of it, and the address which followed, were by any means sufficient to give sanction to two Bills of the magnitude and importance of those which were in consequence produced? The more deliberately he considered this, the more he found himself, placed in a disagreeable dilemma, he was either obliged to believe that a large body of men, capable of committing treason and the most horrible outrages, ~~was~~ actually in motion, or else he must suppose that there were ~~men~~ capable of inventing and believing any thing, who for their own base purposes, and under the influence of the most deplorable credulity, had pretended a sedition to accomplish their designs of destroying the liberties of their country. It was always, he observed, more difficult to believe the evil, though in this precise instance he was compelled to do it. He was not only inclined to think, but confirmed in his opinion by subsequent events, that the present alarm had been created solely by ministers, for the accomplishment of their corrupt purposes of libelling the government. This opinion was not, he said, grounded upon any superficial view of the subject, but deduced from experience of the conduct, temper, and loyalty of the people. In 1792, the house recollect that for similar purposes, similar reports of plots and conspiracies had been industriously circulated. They were asserted in parliament, they were pointed out in publications, and then as at present, they had formed a part of the King's Proclamation. It was generally rumoured at that time, and as generally believed, that a party was actually prepared and ready to seize the tower, carry away the arms, and commence a revolution, and before any person took notice of this manœuvre, the most extraordinary means were taken to circulate the proclamation throughout every part of the kingdom with unexampled rapidity; troops were thrown into the tower to defend it from attack, and the whole government appeared to be in a state of consternation

consternation and dismay. In the course of the trials which followed, he recollected that he had witnessed the most complete and distinct proof that the whole of these atrocious acts originated with the informers, reporters, and spies employed on that occasion. Objection might be made to his attendance on those trials, but as he had reason to doubt the existence of conspiracies, he was resolved to see fair play, and in attending he only discharged his duty as a member of parliament and a guardian of the publick welfare. He again repeated it, that at those trials he found the whole idea of a revolution to be forged, that the informers, reporters, and spies, one and all declared, that they never had suggested that such danger was existing, and that the whole, upon the clearest and best connected evidence, was proved to be a fabrication. That circumstance demonstrated how far the declarations of ministers were to be trusted. A committee it was true had been appointed, and from that committee it was equally true, they had received accounts of an extensive treasonable plot. The existence of the plot, was indeed brought from higher authority, and the trials were deferred till books could be prepared with suitable decorations, and copper-plates engraved, with the representation of pikes to alarm and irritate the public mind. Fortunately for the subject the juries upon the trials, in repeated cases negatived the existence of any treason or conspiracy. At that time, intelligence of a third plot was noised, of which he had had occasion to speak before. A plot which was investigated by the magistrates acting on behalf of government, and in some degree confirmed by their proceedings. A plot announced with every aggravated particular, and exaggerating comment, in all the ministerial papers. This supposed plot, after all, consisted in an intended assassination of his majesty at one of the theatres, with a strange instrument that was never found, and by men who were afterwards released. It was discovered, or pretended to be discovered, which with ministers is nearly the same thing, at a very seasonable time, for it was while the Bills were pending upon which those persons, who were afterwards acquitted by the juries, were indicted. He knew not whether ministers had purposely contrived this plot to prejudice the minds of those juries, he hoped, that they would not have been so deliberately cruel. Such conduct, however, would always expose them to censure, and he knew not with what conscience they could consider it, when they recollected that men had been for a long time detained in prison, and afterwards discharged without any allegations having been made against them,

them, ruined in their fortunes, and some of them he had heard had been, and undone in their reputations. That those who had been apprehended upon this horrible scheme of assassination, were not guilty of the crime laid to their charge, was evident, or they would not have been treated in the manner they had been, what redress could be done for them he could not say, nor was it his business to consider. Each however, had been the third species of tragedy related.

To come to the present time, he was obliged again to recur to his Majesty's speech, from the throne, upon the opening of parliament. That speech had praised the love and temper of the people, and recommended the want of order and submission to the laws which they had uniformly shown under severe pressure, as an additional incentive for parliament to apply with the utmost diligence to the consideration and adoption of such measures as may tend to alleviate their distresses. When this proclamation was delivered, it was plain that ministers had no idea of the existing panic. The King was then heard but congratulations in that House were the advantages derived from the war, one of which was proudly boasted to be, that it had not only destroyed all violent revolutionary principles in France, but that it had produced a similar effect upon many minds here too. How could Ministers possibly reconcile these declarations with those which they have since made? Mr. Sheridan said, though he gave them credit for great ingenuity, he was utterly at a loss to imagine how they could presume, in consequence of one desperate outrage committed by some misguided individual, or, at the most, upon their own confession, by a few thoughtless miscreants, to deprive so loyal, so patient, so submissive a people, as they acknowledged the majority of the people of England to be, of their dearest and most sacred right. He recollected, indeed, that the Right Honourable Gentleman had that day said with great warmth, when reminding him that he had forgotten the progressive irritation, "When meetings have multiplied and bear-bills are swarming every where, shall we assert that there is no occasion for these restrictions?" If the question was warrantable, these meetings and these bear-bills must have swarmed since the opening of parliament: because, if they were so notorious before, why did they put their declaration into his Majesty's mouth, or why did the Right Honourable Gentleman himself assert that French principles were not eradicated by the war? Every one of these considerations, Mr. Sheridan asserted, afforded ample reason to believe it to be nothing more, nor less than a forged plot.

Should the Right Honourable Gentleman persevere in his declaration that an increasing alarm and spirit of discontent prevailed throughout the country, he was bound to prove it. In the former case he had moved for a committee of enquiry, then why not do the same in the present instance. He had taken measures then for the investigation of a plot, when the reasons were not one hundredth part so strong as they were at present. If he adhered to his assertion, that a treasonable plot is actually in existence, and flies from an investigation of it, is it not natural to conclude that he cannot prove it? All proof, however, in his judgment, unnecessary, provided he can persuade the House to adopt his declaration. Was it surely when he spoke of the unanimous loyalty of an unanimous people, though he suddenly seemed apprehensive that some advantage, by adding with a small exception, should be taken of his words in that construction; yet surely, when he spoke of such unanimous loyalty, he cannot permit one would any man say, that for the ungovernable licentiousness of the few exempted, all these obedient, virtuous, generous and uncomplaining people should be deprived of their dearest liberties. No person, however hardened, could have the front to do it. But the Right Honourable Gentleman always flies off to France for his examples. France is the war-horse he mounts upon these occasions, and it would be a happy thing for this country if he would not mount it so often. He enumerates all the instances of treason, murder, and rebellion which arose from popular assemblies in France. He recapitulates the various atrocities of anarchy and bloodshed; the confusion and desolation which followed the convulsions of the people, and then exclaims, if such and such causes produced such and such effects in France, would not similar causes produce similar effects in England? Was it not, he begged to say, a libel on the English constitution? Was it not a libel on the English people, to argue in that manner and draw such conclusions? There was no parity whatever, nor the faintest analogy, would they attempt to assimilate the despotic tyranny, or tyrannical despotism with a well regulated and limited monarchy? He had always deprecated and ever would deprecate such stretched, narrow, and miserable modes of reasoning. It had lately escaped Mr. Sheridan said, the Right Honourable Gentleman's recollection, that the different opinions of the English people were sanctioned by the laws of the land, which they had so long groaned, that their rights were taken away, were used were to be attributed to their former state, that they had been oppressed and ground down till they

they had lost the common feelings and the common character of humanity, and that they were provoked and inflamed by the evils which surrounded them till they came enraged beyond all moderation. Were all the men who perished since the revolution in France, and certainly many of them possessed brilliant talents, to exist once more in this country, they could not, with their continued efforts, produce the effects which had been wrought in France. The effects in that country were adequate to the cause, but the nature of the people of both countries was directly opposite; it was therefore impossible that similar enormities could ever happen in England, he consequently condemned such an opinion as one of the most mischievous that ever entered the head of a statesman. To argue that the same principles would have the same influence over Englishmen as they have had over the deluded people of France, was to argue with a total ignorance of history, of general policy, and of nature itself. It was the despotic government that had degraded and debased the French beneath the dignity of men, and brought them to extremities; but a people who have been used to rational liberty and rational rights, who have not been ground down, nor made the slaves of corrupt government, would never be guilty of such crimes. He pressed this the more, because it was the sole principle upon which the Gentlemen of the opposite side rested; and unless it could be proved absolutely that the Bill was intended for the protection of the Monarch and the safety of the constitution, he was unwilling to surrender the rights and liberties of the subject on such precarious terms. The fallacy and false principles of such reasoning were not more to be guarded against than the barbarity and ill faith of monarchs; men might as well say that all monarchs must be barbarous and wicked, and then contend for curtailing the power of the present King of England. The principles would run together, and it would be difficult to oppose with an interference. If ministers were to be allowed the influence they drew from the conduct of the people of France, for the purpose of applying it to the people of England in a similar situation, it would lead to the most extravagant and absurd deductions. From the oppressive and unjust conduct of the Empress of Russia to the Poles, from the gross breach of faith of Prussia to this country, and the unavourable conduct of other sovereigns, they might conclude, with an Honourable Gentleman, and for the other part, that desperate evils must have desperate remedies. He acknowledged the truth of the maxim, but the existence of the evils should be proved before the deduction was drawn from them. That the

popular meetings and the outrage on his Majesty had any connection, he peremptorily denied. At the late county meeting for Hertfordshire, an Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Baker) had, in his opinion, acted with great impropriety in coupling the congratulation to his Majesty with a charge against the societies. A charge, he termed it, so long as it was possible to have investigation; if it were possible to have investigation, and gentlemen should then fly from it, he would no longer call it a charge but a calumny, for such, in that case, it undoubtedly becomes instantly, when either evidence that can be had is rejected, or investigation is refused. An Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Canning) had, he observed, asserted, that the doctrine of King-killing was preached at Copenhagen House. If it were true that such doctrines had been preached, prosecutions must have been commenced; or the magistrates and the executive government would have been guilty of great and scandalous neglect, he was, therefore, warranted in disbelieving it. So far, however, was the fact different from the assertion, that it was generally known that no such pernicious doctrines were practised; on the contrary the persons present, all of them, professed a spirit of loyalty to his Majesty, notwithstanding their declamations against his ministers, against the war, and in support of a parliamentary reform. Another Honourable gentleman (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) had that evening said, that inflammatory hand-bills were swarming in every part of the metropolis. These hand-bills might be, and possibly were, written and published by some of the spies for their own profit and advantage. Let it be recollected that the spies themselves confessed in a court of justice, that to encourage and deceive others they were the loudest in a cry for reform, and the most forward to use inflammatory language: Where then was he to find proof that those hand-bills were published or circulated by the societies, unless they would suffer him to know from whom those hand-bills came, and how they were obtained. When once a government encourages spies and informers, it became, he said, a part of their business, to commit such forgeries and create such terror. The Honourable Gentleman might contradict him by saying, that the business of spies and informers was a respectable and necessary trade; no man, however, would pretend that it would ever be much respected, and therefore such odium and such suspicion must necessarily attach to it. With the single and solitary exception of Watts, (executed in Scotland) he conceived it expedient, that Ministers should suppress spies, as was formerly the practice with those who brought

brought up thieves, and instructed them while young in stealing, to share their profits. Mr. Sheridan said, he had himself heard a man declare, that in the heat of his zeal and loyalty, he appointed another to watch those whom he suspected, for which he gave him a guinea a week, but that at the last he brought him accounts so alarming, that he gave him two guineas a week. Such, would inevitably be the case, and we should go on from worse to worse, and all would be imputable to the same cause. He mentioned the very meeting which had that day been assembled in Palace-yard, and the order and decorum exhibited on that occasion; if it had happened that the meeting had been held before the opening of the Session of Parliament, he declared, he should not have been surprised if it had been used as an argument for the necessity of the Bill. He wished an Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Canning) would come into his committee and prove that the societies did not preach the doctrine of king-killing, because in that case a prosecution would be instituted, and the truth be investigated regularly and by due course of law. Mr. Sheridan concluded his speech by moving, "That a committee be appointed to enquire into the existence, extent, and danger of seditious meetings, referred to in his Majesty's Proclamation on the 14th of November."

Mr. Powys said, notwithstanding the notice which the Honourable Gentleman had given of his motion, he had not expected he would have made it, he did not believe the Hon. Gentleman would have gravely brought forward such a proposition to retard the legislative proceedings of the house on so important a subject. The house had not, it was true, nor need it have, specific evidence of the treasonable designs of the meetings: there were sufficient circumstances to prove the general tendency of their machinations. The notoriety alone was enough to justify the legislature of the country in resorting to strong and decided regulations, to prevent the consequences that might arise from such inflammatory assemblies. The Hon Gentleman had stated it as a grievance, in order to connect the outrage offered to his Majesty, and the doctrines preached at the meetings alluded to: this was the very plea used by the societies themselves, their insinuation was precisely the same.

The Honourable Gentleman had stated an alternative respecting the publications handed about at one of the meetings; viz. either that there was sedition, or that there was not. The Honourable Gentleman asked if there was sedition, why not prove it? If it could not be proved, the thing was a forgery. To this publication the name of Citizen Lee, as printer, was annexed:

annexed; the Honourable Gentleman was aware that the said Citizen Lee was not his Majesty's printer. It was notorious that Citizen Lee was usually employed by the Corresponding Society; and in this instance, the Honourable Gentleman should shew that he was not as usual engaged by them. It was plain from all the proceedings and doctrines of the meetings, that the government was the great obstacle in their way; that at government they aimed all their efforts; and therefore government was obliged to endeavour to secure itself from the secret and open attacks of weak, insidious and dangerous men.

Mr. Powys said, if his house were attacked by robbers, no man would deny that it would be his duty to secure it against similar attacks in future; so much so, that it would be criminally negligent in him, if he omitted to use every possible precaution. Such was the predicament of government. The daring attack on the sacred person of the king, was a blow at monarchy; nay, it struck at the root of the constitution. This attack, which aggravated and crowned all the former wickedness of designing men, put out of the question, the allegations set forth in the preamble of the Bill afforded cogent and very sufficient reasons to press forward and pass such a measure into a law.

With regard to the persons, who had been tried in consequence of the doctrine held and promulgated at the meetings in question, he would not go so far as a Right Honourable Gentleman had done in calling them "acquitted felons," he would only say, that they had not completed the measure of their guilt. Who would say that the designs of the societies could be denied or disproved? Their criminality, it was true, did not go so far as to subject the offenders to capital punishment, as in cases of treason. What then?—Ought they to be suffered to proceed in such a way as might end in the ruin of the country, because there was no existing law to attach upon their seditious practices and proceedings? Gentlemen seemed willing to justify them on the ground of excess of patriotism, and thence to consider them guilty merely of venial indiscretions. He appealed to the documents and authorities of those societies themselves. He would ask any gentleman, who had read their resolutions, did they mean no more than parliamentary reform? Was it not evident that they wished to overturn the government of the country: they held out the French system as a system of imitation to England. This could not be controverted. Did not the proceedings in Scotland—did not the debates at Chalk-farm, and

and elsewhere, sufficiently justify him in making such a charge? The House were already in possession of numberless facts to substantiate it. The views of these societies and meetings were obviously narrowed since last year: then, they publicly declared that they would never petition parliament. Now they condescend to petition. The Honourable Gentleman had said, that their demeanour was peaceable and orderly; but the Honourable Gentleman's appearance for the moment might have sufficient weight to suspend the operation of wickedness; his eloquence they all knew had charms, that whenever he pleased to exert it could fascinate the multitude, soothe their spirits, and persuade them to abandon the violence of tumult for the calm of admiration.

Ille regit dictis animis et pectora mulcet.

While gentlemen of fortune and talents attended their meetings, the members might be willing to conceal their designs, and delusively to profess that their aim was honest and constitutional. He wished to ask the house, was not the general notoriety enough to justify them in the measure? Was not that the ground of the Riot Act?—"Look," said he, "to the precedents of the house, you will find that general notoriety was all on which the Bill in that instance was grounded; and yet the measure was agreed to *nem. con.* What were we to think of the conduct of our ancestors in the gun-powder plot? Did they go into evidence about that plot? Had they done so, the House of Commons ought to have been gun-powder proof. Such was the case with the Bill before the house: the notoriety was such, that going into proof would be ridiculous. The parliament of Copenhagen-house, and the parliament assembled in St. Stephens, Westminster, could not exist together. The British parliament, as consisting of King, Lords, and Commons, would be crushed for ever if they did not crush the unconstitutional parliaments in question.

1. *Jekyll* said, if his honourable and learned Friend opposite (the Attorney General) had neglected to prosecute the persons guilty of the crimes which were spoken of, as so glaring and so common, he would have been guilty of a high breach of duty and of his general character, especially when that neglect might have led to consequences so fatal as those apprehended; but that was no argument in support of the present Bill, nor did it apply to the discussion which his Honourable Friend (Mr. Sheridan) had so properly given rise

to that day. The house, it must confessed, had been hurried into legislative acts formerly, without sufficient grounds to warrant the measures taken by them, and every man he presumed would agree, that when a Bill was brought in to restrain, or rather to sacrifice the liberties of Englishmen, clear proofs of its necessity should be produced. The *Habeas Corpus Act* had been, in his opinion, very unnecessarily suspended, the decency of a regular enquiry had nevertheless even then been observed. What he desired to know was, the evidence on which they were now required to proceed? Nothing of the nature of proof or necessity had been offered to justify or to authorise the present measure; nothing was contained in the evidence sent down from the other house, but garbled facts which could scarce form the ground of a warrant of commitment. He called on lawyers, on gentlemen of his own profession, to declare honestly whether they thought such evidence would induce a grand jury to find a bill of indictment, much less warrant a verdict upon trial. No connection had been established between certain proceedings of the Corresponding Society, and the outrage offered to his Majesty, or any thing like proof produced of the dangerous designs with which the latter had been branded. An Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Powys) indeed, with a happy flight of imagination, "his eye in a fine frenzy rolling" from Islington to Westminster, was able to discern the springs and principles of the riot and outrage on his Majesty in what passed in the field near Copenhagen-house; he would ask whether any thing but so poetical an imagination as that of the Honourable Gentleman could connect the parliament at Westminster Hall with the meeting at Copenhagen-house, or establish any thing like proof, that intentions were there entertained of a criminal nature. If it was true that the people had nothing to do with laws but to obey them, as it had been laid down by spiritual authority* in another place, it was proper that the house should consider well what the laws were which they were called upon to impose on the subjects. Were such arbitrary maxims as the one he had referred to, consonant to the meek spirit of the Christian religion? Could any man who considered himself a successor to the apostles, a disciple of the prince of peace, reconcile such a libel on freedom and christianity to his conscience? The gunpowder-plot, which the Honourable Gentleman had urged as a precedent for acting without enquiry, was not a

* See Bishop of Rochester's speech in the House of Lords, November 17, page 514.

very fortunate instance; there was this clumsy fact in the way, the gunpowder was actually found, and the overt act was indisputable. If he saw the name of Citizen Lee to any libellous hand-bills, how did it follow that they did not originate from the sources whence they had been said to proceed—the very contrivance of ministers themselves. With regard to the case of Dr. Titus Oates, in that instance, the ministers of Charles the Second had, for their own purposes, encouraged, or framed similar machinations to those of the present administration. That they were really the production of ministers themselves, and propagated for their designs, was confirmed by the supineness of the Attorney General, who had instituted no prosecution, nor was it, he believed, designed to bring any forward. Such then were the shallow pretences on which they were required to pass two bills, one of which assassinated the best privileges of the constitution; the other gags the mouth of every British subject; Bills which were not in the smallest degree calculated to meet the danger which had threatened his Majesty, or correspond to the outrage stated as the immediate cause of their adoption.

An Honourable Gentleman (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) on the other side of the house, had himself formerly been no small admirer of debating clubs, he had been accustomed to frequent them, although he seemed now to favour their suppression, and to join with the late magistrate of London, who had displayed such distinguished zeal for dispersing them. Such indeed had been the Right Honourable Gentleman's ardour for debate, that he had even harangued in a mask on some occasions. He had however now pulled off the mask and disclosed himself in his true character.

He declared he was not acquainted with the purport of the inflammatory hand-bills and publications said to be in circulation; they had never fallen in his way; but there were some publications differing in their nature, though equally libellous in their tendency, equally hostile to the principles of the constitution; a pamphlet had been attributed to a person* much in favour of ministers, one who had been employed in every kind of work, in which he maintained that the British constitution was an essential monarchy, and that the other two branches of it were derived from its bounty and dependent upon its favour.

* Mr. Recyves.

He should feel himself unworthy of the name he bore and of the family he sprang from, if he did not express his deepest indignation at such doctrines, openly avowed and published under the auspices of a government that delighted to asperse the principles of the revolution—doctrines that ought to be the subject of a prosecution instituted by that house and infinitely more pernicious than what had been uttered by any Sacheverel of modern times.

Could any man imagine a minister so unsuccessful in every undertaking in which he embarked, whose conduct was marked by a train of such disasters and disgrace, and the glaring folly of whose measures were only equalled by the obstinacy with which he perseveres in them, nevertheless so rooted in depravity, so lost to shame as to adopt measures calculated to aggravate and increase the public discontent and dissatisfaction? Who could feel surprise that the contemplation of such incapacity, and the pressure of such misfortunes, had produced outrages among the people? Smarting under the scourge of famine, and irritated at their losses, sinking under the weight of grievances which the accumulation of taxes and the ruin of their industry occasioned, what wonder was there that they should proceed to unjustifiable outrages? The minister himself could not but be sensible that the temper of a people must be so thoroughly roused by sufferings so poignant and so extreme, that it would burst forth into open acts of violence. Was the minister of this country thought himself unsafe without a guard of soldiers, or without stables to attend him to a dinner-party, could they doubt that he was convinced that his own measures must have provoked the public indignation, and that it was unnecessary to seek for the cause of outrage in a settled affection to royalty. The minister conscious of the calamitous condition to which he has reduced his country, can no longer bear the contempt of his fellow-citizens, and therefore he devises laws to repress the natural display of these feelings. He was now determined to stop their mouths; not indeed with bread, but with gags, and resolves to wrest from them the miserable consolation of complaint. Though that obnoxious clause of the Bill by which the confidence of private families was to be violated had been abandoned, the minister had converted magistrates into judges of logic, of rhetoric, and of political opinions, and constituted them the immediate executioners of a rapid and arbitrary sentence, which they were authorized and in a manner called upon to pronounce. Shoulded by these enactments, the minister thought he might venture to appear in public

public without dread of the opinion of people on affairs with which they were prohibited from intermeddling, without fear of that resentment which they were prohibited in any manner to testify. When the sovereign is insulted in consequence of the odium of ministerial measures, and a few individuals break into indecent excesses, the whole people of England are to be deprived of their liberties. Before the house could decide upon a measure so fatal to the constitution, and so injurious to the people of England, they would surely expect more evidence than they yet had before them, which could only be obtained by the enquiry.

Sir *James Sanderson* rose in consequence of the allusions of Mr. Jekyll to his mayoralty, and spoke in justification of his conduct, against which, for the course of these three years, no charge, he said, had been brought on account of any of the public transactions in which he was engaged. The proceedings of the public meetings, 1792, were, he said, alarming and dangerous, and frequently claimed his vigilance and exertion. As an instance of the misguided and perverse intentions of those deluded men, he stated that the sentiments expressed by one of their leaders, who was brought before him, were, that "He would never rest until this country was governed by a commonwealth." Every thing that had since happened convinced him that not one moment should be lost in putting a stop to the further proceedings of political clubs, as that delay might endanger the constitution and undo the country. He believed the existing laws of the country were amply sufficient for the purpose of suppressing criminal attempts on the constitution, whether seditious or treasonable, and he was convinced that if they were not properly executed it arose from the secret views and practices of ministers themselves. He believed in his conscience that these men, who were described to be so dangerous to the government, had been allowed to proceed in their plans in order to turn the public attention from an abominable war, begun without necessity, in opposition to the interest of this country and to the maxims of sound policy, and which, in its continuance, had been pregnant with ruin and misery. He could never, he said, forget, that some years ago, when it had been proposed to investigate the state of seditious meetings in this country, the minister had undervalued their importance, and affected to consider them as too inconsiderable to merit the particular interference of the house. He had no connection whatever with seditious meetings himself. He even disapproved of many of their proceedings, and should not be sorry

to see a stop put to them if possible. He nevertheless considered these men as still more dangerous who reprobated the conduct of juries, and endeavoured to bring them into suspicion. Every man, who valued the constitution, rejoiced in the acquittal of the persons alluded to. An attempt had been directly made to stretch the law, and to raise offences, which amounted to mere misdemeanours, into the extreme criminality of treason, but happily it proved fruitless; if the hand-bills so frequently mentioned, really were circulated, they ought, in his opinion, to have been punished. But as no prosecution was instituted, he could not believe that they ever existed.

Mr. Curwen said, the case to which the Honourable Gentleman referred was by no means in point. An overt-act really under the observation of the house might be a reason for proceeding without investigation, which would not authorise them to act in so loose a manner. The ground of notoriety was not sufficient, because no connection between the meetings of any society, and the outrage on his Majesty, was established by it. With regard to the hand-bills, encouraging king-killing, he should have considered himself a traitor, if he had met with such hand-bills, without discovering that they existed; however, it did not appear, that on the present occasion any disposition to punish the authors of them had been manifested. The minister had endeavoured to brand every man who differed from him with the foulest imputations, and the converts whom the Right Hon. Gentleman had made to his party had studiously followed his example; but much as they prided themselves on such an acquisition of strength, it was the severest blow which the government could receive. All confidence in the virtue of public characters was thereby destroyed. When the world saw those very characters who had exerted themselves most strenuously in opposition to the minister's measures, and who had reprobated him as the enemy of the constitution, so soon forget their professions and join in the support of every part of his system, they would be justly filled with indignation.—When men abandon their principles, and descend to all the mean and selfish conduct which they formerly were the first to condemn, was it wonderful that a contempt of the government and a dislike to the constitution were excited?—Groaning under the miseries which such a combination produced, and the distresses which pressed constantly upon them, amidst an universal diffidence of public men, was it matter of surprise, that under the weight of such evils, an attack was
made

made, which expressed in a most unfortunate, unbecoming manner, the general indignation?

The country harrassed by calamity and the most grinding distress, experienced the bitter fruits of that confidence which had been so liberally and so unwisely reposed in the Right Hon. Gentleman. The necessity of having evidence before them, Mr. Curwen said, was undeniable. He would not trust the representations of the Honourable Gentleman, as his conduct displayed one uniform scene of delusion and imposture. In the speech from the throne, at the opening of the session, ministers extolled the peaceable and loyal temper of the people, asserted that French principles had been overthrown among other effects of the war; and afterwards they came forward to propose laws, the necessity of which they rested upon events that happened prior to that period.

If the decided opposition which had been raised against the pernicious measures of administration, and the loss of confidence that attended them without doors, should produce a change of ministers, he hoped those who had so honourably distinguished themselves by their bold and manly resistance of the present unconstitutional Bills would adhere to the professions which they now held. The restoration of confidence in public men was in his opinion, essential to the happiness of the country, discontent had been produced and cherished by the loss of it. The conduct of the house in refusing enquiry where it ought to have taken place, and in their careless superintendence of the public money, as well as in their implicit acquiescence in every ministerial measure, was little deserving respect; the people in the difference of their situation did not, he believed, exercise so much partiality in their judgment. What then must they think of the corruption and prodigality of ministers, of the sums of public money, which they had lavished on their favourites, their creatures, and their dependents? Especially what must they think of the unexampled pension bestowed upon Mr. Burke, to whose private virtues he believed much regard was due? In the mode however, in which the pension had been bestowed, Mr. Burke's character had been degraded. Had he really deserved it on national and public grounds, it should have come before parliament. Had it been so brought forward, he would have opposed it, because, even public virtue, was not, always to receive public remuneration. Liberality of rewards rendered the purity of the motive suspected, and injured the general course of real patriotism. The consciousness of having discharged their duty

duty was the best and most unequivocal reward of public services.

Without further evidence, (which, if it existed, an enquiry would bring forward,) the house Mr. Curwen said, was not warranted to proceed with the Bill. The present measure was too weak for actual insurrection, too strong for the existing state of the country. With regard to the facts stated by ministers, he made no scruple to say he utterly disbelieved them; they were so much in the habit of imposing on the credulity of the people. He repeated it, that he thought the pretence of the outrage was assumed to divert the attention of the public from the ruinous and destructive war in which ministers had involved us; that the country if fairly confronted, would decidedly declare its disapprobation, and that ministers would not decline the enquiry, but from a consciousness of inability to produce any evidence.

The *Attorney General* said, that agreeable to his habits, he should have continued silent till he had heard the arguments of Gentlemen on the present Bill, had he not been particularly adverted to in the course of the debate. Though he saw the existence of the country at stake, he should have collected the whole of the arguments against the Bill before he replied, had he not found himself immediately attacked.

One Honourable Gentleman said, that he ought to have prosecuted. To this he could reply, that when it was proved before, that serious dangers did exist—when the first magistrate of the country submitted to the House, charges to that extent, the accused were cleared by verdicts of their country. On that occasion he thought that even the juries had done their duty, and that the House had acted properly in laying the charges as they did. He could not, however, consider it fair to make such an attack on a man, when the grand jury, after much deliberation, had found the charge laid in the indictment; and as he could collect nothing to the contrary from the learned bench that presided, it was his duty to follow up the prosecution. Even had he entertained a different sentiment himself, it would surely be a mistake that the character of the law of the country coincided with his own peculiar but public duty to oblige him to do as he had done. He was as fallible and as liable to error as other men; but he declared before God and his country, that there was nothing which he stated to the jury as *Attorney General*, that he would not state, were he on the bench. He thought the Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Jekyll) rash in his attack on him. He was conscious of having done his duty; and he was

was happy to say, that a man with industry and sound talents might rise to high situations without forfeiting his principles. Looking back a few years, he had strong incentives to industry for the sake of his family and children. His industry had not been unsuccessful: such were the blessings of the British constitution, that a man in office might serve himself and the public at the same time. With his honour and principle intire, he might, if it were necessary, retire into privacy. Would any man say it was his duty to lay the charges for any thing but treason, when any of the five judges who presided did not consider the crime charged in any other light.

If the Honourable Gentleman really thought him negligent in the performance of his duty, he hoped the Honourable Gentleman would make a separate motion upon the subject. The Attorney General entered into a detail of the proceedings on the trials: Two persons who were called spies were, he said, examined, who, from minutes taken by them, proved the conduct of the societies for two years; and though the counsel for the defendants called two or three persons to invalidate their evidence, it remained uncontroverted. This was ample proof of the existence of sedition.

An honourable Gentleman said, that the parliament at Copthagen-house could not at the same time exist with the parliament at Westminster without danger to the latter; an observation in which he concurred without pressing the argument farther. It was true, the people of this country, agreeable to the constitution, might assemble to discuss political subjects; but how far they might, in the present complexion of things, abuse this privilege, was a question highly important to the House to consider. Respecting those who in the course of the debate had been repeatedly and contemptuously termed spies, he hoped that Gentleman would not again use as an argument, what had been more than once loosely asserted, namely, that ministers had employed them to furnish arguments for bringing such a measure into that house. Let Gentlemen consider that the British constitution carried the liberty of the subject so high in its practice, that the means which might at first view appear to destroy it, would, perhaps, best tend to its conservation. It had been the wise usage of our ancestors to give a part for the safety of the whole. Such were the various suspensions of the *habeas corpus* to be traced in the statute book, which, though they trespassed on the Bill of Rights, were the causes of preserving it for ages. If Gentlemen took the trouble to see what was done under such suspensions, they would find that the happiness

of debating them in that House, which they at this time fully enjoyed, was in a great measure owing to those timely and temporary sacrifices of freedom on the part of the people. It was, nevertheless, to be observed, that it had not been usual to extend such provisions beyond the temporary necessity.

The societies had totally changed their system; last year they declared they would not petition; now they do petition: he would not say how far they might be sincere in this. He wished to call the attention of Gentlemen to the libels circulated at the meetings of these societies: he had in his possession, and in his hands, libels, printed by Citizen Lee, that went to the same extent.

The first was entitled, "A Summary of Citizenship." This summary he read, which described the tyrants of England to consist of various classes, such as priests, soldiers, and lawyers: priests it stated to be the preachers and supporters of tyranny and monarchy; and declared the monarch winked at clerical peculation. That the books of Moses and Christ it asserted, were never written by the authors whose name they bore, but fabricated by the propagators and supporters of despotism. This work, the Attorney General said, was to be printed expressly for the edification and instruction of society. The other was called, "A Summary of the 'Rights of Kings;'" and printed by Citizen Lee, at the Tree of Liberty.

It set forth in general, that the curse of God to man was kingly government, that the lower orders were sacrificed to monarchy, and that the poor, luckless inhabitants of the country were half starved and emaciated—see England! The expressions of it against the King, were so gross, so base, and scandalous, that decency forbade his mentioning them. Every body knew that there were people now who lived by libels: it was become a trade. People went into a shop, not to find and buy a single libel, but into a shop full of nothing but libels. It was not unusual also, in different parts of the town, to see the wares of useful trades exposed to sale on one side of the shop, and libels on the other.

Such were their numbers, that it was his sincere and conscientious opinion, they could not be properly dealt with, or effectually checked, if some law were not made, expressly, to stop their progress. They appeared to be multiplied for the purpose of rendering prosecution more difficult, and thus baffling the law. The Bills would not he said, have come into the House, if he did not conceive them to be justified by the notoriety

notoriety of such infamous proceedings. The House would recollect, that in the years 91 and 92, the object of the societies was clearly and distinctly universal suffrage, which was equivalent to no King. They addressed the Jacobin societies of France to that effect; and received for answer, that they (the Revolutionists of France) hoped that England would soon have a National Convention; and they would be shortly transmitting to the soldiers of England, weapons and pikes, and bonnets of liberty.

Let the language and conduct of the meetings at Sheffield, Wakefield, and Chalk Farm be duly weighed. They did not say they would petition parliament; but called their legislators their plunderers, their enemies and oppressors; meaning, no doubt, the three branches of the legislature. If Gentlemen considered these circumstances, they would at least see there was reason enough to deliberate, whether such a law were necessary. If the societies and meetings were suffered to proceed, the business of the country would not go on. The libels and doctrines circulated at St. George's-fields, at Chalk Farm, at the Globe Tavern, and Copenhagen-house, were sufficient to inflame and irritate the minds of the people from properly estimating the blessings they enjoy under a free government. He further wished to impress it on the minds of Gentlemen, that the rewards of such innovators were the wages of industry and labour, given by the lower orders to their corrupters and deceivers.

Surely then it could not be denied that there was sufficient ground for the Bill. For his own part, he scrupled not to declare that it required discussion and deliberation; and however irksome it was to a lover of the constitution to feel his liberty in the smallest degree abridged, every wise man would admit, that when every thing dear to him was in danger of destruction from the daring herd of rash innovators, and the alarming and licentious doctrines of the dealers in sedition, that, valuable as British freedom was, it was well worth their consent that a part should be sacrificed for a time for the safety of the whole. The provisions of the Bill were such, that the peace of no family would be disturbed, nor would a constitutional club or assembly be interrupted.

Mr. *J. Hawkins Browne*, rejoiced that publick spirit was not lost, and that publick virtue was still alive in the country. When it was considered how many exalted and most respectable characters filled the publick offices of state, no man could doubt the fact, or dispute their integrity. Extremes were at all times to be guarded against, but most of all in times

of tumult. It was the duty of the house to direct their attention equally to the care of the monarch, and preservation of public liberty. The existing laws were obviously insufficient to the preservation of the country from treason and sedition in the new shapes they have assumed of late. The conduct of his majesty's ministers had he observed, been investigated, and the result was, that an increase of confidence was given to them. The majority of that house could he was persuaded, have no motive for supporting the minister, if they did not think it their own and the common interest. The house undoubtedly ought to be extremely cautious, in passing laws to restrain liberty; they should neither be too strong nor too weak, but the necessity of the time should be particularly kept in view, while they were under consideration. The notoriety of the prevalence of sedition was, he conceived, sufficient to substantiate the charge. Various opinions of the extent of the guilt, he was aware had prevailed; but all men were to a certain extent agreed in its existence. Gentlemen he reminded them, were responsible to themselves and their posterity for their endeavours, to prevent and suppress it. The clubs and meetings in question evidently wished to excite tumult and revolution in the country on two grounds of grievance, the weight of taxes, and the high price of bread. They followed the example of France, and were anxious to introduce French principles, to the subversion of order, law, and religion.

The civil wars of France were, Mr. Browne observed, more bloody than those of this country: but even in this country great bloodshed and calamity had been the consequence of such evils. The notoriety of the wish in certain bodies of men to excite commotion, was in itself sufficient to justify ministers in bringing in the Bill; but the case was made stronger, when gentlemen considered the report of the select committee, of which he had been a member, for investigating the papers of the Corresponding Society. The facts that then appeared were never contradicted: and he would venture to say, that whoever read that report, and the proceedings of the trials for high treason, could have no doubt but the persons were guilty of great misdemeanors, though perhaps they ought not, as the event of the trials apparently evinced, to have been prosecuted for high treason. He begged gentlemen, to consider what was passing on the great theatre of Europe. They had seen an extensive, populous, and naturally fertile and productive country, the most flourishing seven years ago, reduced in that short period, to a state

state of the lowest degradation; let any man compare French despotism with the anarchy that prevails at present, and that is likely to prevail, could he deny but that the former condition was much preferable to the present republican liberty? This desolation, he said, it was notorious, had taken place in consequence of clubs and societies, and it behoved this country to guard against similar mischief, resulting from a similar cause. The question before the house was, whether they would go into a committee to substantiate a charge which was notorious? To this motion he did not hesitate to give his negative.

Mr. Fox said, he meant to confine himself to the motion before the house, and to avoid going at all into the provisions of the Bill; it would, however, be necessary for him to take some notice of what had fallen from the learned gentleman opposite on the first point, which was of a personal nature between the learned gentleman and himself. He had not been one of those who had maintained that the Attorney General ought to have prosecuted the gentlemen tried last year for a misdemeanour instead of high treason. He considered him to have been fully justified in the manner in which he had proceeded, and, indeed, after the declarations of both houses of parliament that those persons had been guilty of high treason, it became the duty of the Honourable and learned Gentleman to prosecute them for that crime. If the learned Gentleman's own opinion had carried him the length of thinking them guilty of high treason, he ought to have prosecuted them in that manner rather than for an inferior crime, from a presumption that a verdict might have been more easily obtained against them on that point; so far he had fully explained himself: there was one trial, however, Mr. Fox said, that of Mr. Walker, which he held in the greatest horror and detestation; a prosecution that he must still say there ought to be some enquiry into; while they were reviewing the past conduct of ministers with regard to state prosecutions, if such glaring injustice was not examined into, that circumstance would tend greatly to increase the discontents that exist in the country concerning those proceedings. There were likewise others, though of an inferior nature, that in his mind, called for enquiry. One Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Powys) in the stile of personal invective, which generally forms the best part of his oratory, had laboured, as upon former occasions, to prove, that though Thelwall and Hardy were acquitted of treason, there was enough of proof to convict them of sedition, an inference which no candid or sensible mind would

ever allow to follow from their having been acquitted. The learned gentleman had next revived an old subject of dispute between them, which was, that he (Mr. Fox) had held that the verdict of those juries had disproved both that there was any such treasons or conspiracy in existence, and if there was, that those persons were not guilty of them. Mr. Fox said, he still must maintain, after the most mature consideration of the subject, that if the juries were right in their verdict, no such traitorous conspiracy existed as that which had been held out as the great ground of alarm. Upon the whole of this part of the subject he thought the Attorney General was right in prosecuting for the higher crime, if he thought they had been guilty of it, rather than presuming that though they were not guilty of treason they certainly were guilty of the inferior crime; and he must repeat that the event of those trials disproved the alledged conspiracies. In many criminal cases, which depend on the nicety of legal evidence, much difficulty may arise, but in those cases there had been none, nothing secret or hidden; all the transactions were open and avowed, and in possession of the court. With regard to what he had said formerly about not putting the defendants upon their defence after hearing the evidence for the crown, and the declaration of the learned gentleman that their counsel were not of that opinion, he observed, 1st, that he fully believed the jury, who were men as respectable in their characters and conduct, as those whose ambition led them into higher situations of life; and 2dly, the judges likewise were satisfied of the total want of evidence upon those trials. With respect to the two Honourable Gentlemen who managed the defences, one of whom was his intimate friend, and for the other he entertained the highest respect, it was their duty and their pride to exert their best endeavours in every way that would be serviceable to their clients. But what had all these things to do with the Bills now brought forward? Bills of a very strong nature had been brought forward in 1791 and 1792, and they had suspended the *Habeas Corpus* Act on what he considered as slight grounds, renewed the suspension on no stronger grounds, and at last allowed it to expire; on the first day of the session also, ministers came down and put words into the King's Speech, declaring their happiness in being able to state, that one good effect of the measures they had pursued was, that the country was now perfectly quiet and tranquil, having no dread from the dangers with which it had been threatened. Was it then the proceedings of a meeting in St. George's Fields or at Copenhagen-house that these

these Bills were founded upon? If so, it must be remembered that both happened prior to the meeting of parliament; and that this was pretended, or that they had then any such idea, was so flimsy an assertion, that he defied even the most ignorant credulity to believe it for a moment. The next possible ground of the Bills was the attack upon his Majesty's person, in his passage to Parliament, an outrage that every man must hold in the greatest degree of abhorrence. But was this simply the ground for bringing in those Bills? Certainly not. Ministers find it necessary to couple and connect this atrocious deed with the meeting at Copenhagen-house. Notwithstanding all that had happened in Scotland—notwithstanding the result of the trials of Hardy, &c.—and notwithstanding the inefficiency of all the prosecutions, yet they thought the time was come when they might safely allow the *Habeas Corpus* Act to expire, and not to bring in any new Bills. Now, however, they pretend to see better, and tell us it is not upon any of the grounds on which they introduced former Bills, that they bring in this, it is upon the outrage committed on the 29th of October, and the connection between that horrid act and the recently previous meeting of the Corresponding Society. This connection and coincidence in point of time and circumstances was strongly asserted, but let gentlemen look to the truth of it; no proof of such connection was offered, it was supposed to rest merely upon the notoriety of the fact mentioned by ministers. A very curious species of evidence, though followed by proof still worse; he meant that detachment of evidence sent from the Lords. Upon the first day of the session they voted an address more of adulation than any thing else, and then came a proclamation stating crimes, and offering rewards; was the House of Commons to be so far degraded as to be obliged to act upon this proclamation, upon the mere *ipse dixit* of the minister, without having proof of any one fact stated in it established by any sort of evidence whatever? Good God, said Mr. Fox, is the House of Commons to be placed in this state of contempt, for I avow, that no transaction of the worst of those societies, or the enemies of the constitution, can bring such contempt upon this house as the present measure, which calls upon you without a shadow of evidence or proof, but merely on his Majesty's proclamation and the minister's assertion to take words for facts, and to proceed to pass laws which abridge, if not totally destroy British Liberty. Libels of a most audacious nature had been mentioned, and some of them

them read, but there was no proof of their having been either written or published by the meeting at Copenhagen-house, nor could he believe they were so from the extreme diffidence and distrust in which he regarded any assertions that came from the quarter which those did. Let the house enquire into the fact before they proceed upon it, and why, said Mr. Fox, did not ministers bring their spies to the bar of the house, to give some support to their stories; spies were, he observed, of different characters, for instance, if a man sees a conspiracy going on and gives information of it, his conduct is meritorious, and he would be highly criminal, were he to conceal it. If he was to get into the confidence of the conspirators, in order to ascertain whether it did exist, his conduct would be more doubtful; but if he acts like the spies they had been accustomed to see of late, who intimated themselves first into confidence, then spurred on their associates to the most violent and daring conspiracies, language does not furnish words to express the moral detestation in which good men must hold them; their evidence may be admissible, but who would receive it, unless with the greatest reluctance and caution. It was to this description of spies his Honourable Friend had alluded; but the Attorney General had said their evidence might be supposed good, because no person had come forward to contradict them; the opinion of most men on that point, would, however, rather be that they certainly were guilty, though not convicted of perjury. [The Attorney General explained that a Bill of indictment for perjury had been presented against one of the witnesses upon the trials at the Old Bailey, but the grand jury had thrown it out.

Mr. Fox said it was no proof to him of the innocence of the man, that the Bill had been thrown out. A fact might exist of which legal proof could not be adduced. Having made this observation, Mr. Fox recurred to Mr. Walker's trial, and reminded the house of the horrid perjury of two witnesses, who had since been convicted and punished, *Dun* and another, and yet by the proposed evidence of that man, Mr. Paul was detained many months, and would have been tried, but luckily, thank God, two witnesses were necessary, and there was not another *Dun* to be found in the kingdom. After this gentleman's life, character, and every thing that was dear to him had been at stake upon such gross and infamous evidence, he begged to know what reparation had been made to him, as there could be no doubt that government was answerable for the guilt attending such transactions? The learned

learned gentleman had declared that these were peculiar times, and men might act together from different causes; and then he asked if all who are the minister's friends and support his measures, were to be included in the general charge of conspiring against the constitution, brought by the gentleman in opposition against them? He would ask the Honourable Gentleman in return, if he believed all the members of the Corresponding Society held the opinions, and proceeded to the acts with which he had charged some individual members of that Society? Among them, and even in the Cabinet, there were some good men and some degree of virtue, but when their designs are seen to rise by degrees to the most flagitious acts of oppression, who was there that would not wish to see peaceable resistance given to such daring strides of arbitrary power? The learned gentleman had prefaced his speech with different views of the nature of the British constitution, in some of which he agreed with him, in others he thought his own opinions more applicable. He agreed with the learned gentleman that the constitution was better adapted for the enjoyment of practical liberty than that of any other country, but he rather thought that had been the case formerly more than it was at present; it would be invidious to state any precise epoch when the alteration began to be most manifest, yet without meaning any thing, either personal or disrespectful to the king, he must state that from the time of the revolution till his Majesty's accession to the throne, practical liberty had been greater than it had been since, and that the system which had been acted upon in this reign was more hostile to liberty than during the period to which he had alluded. He declared he could discover nothing in the present state of the country that could justify this new infringement on the liberties of the subject intended by the Bill. So far from it, the power and influence of the crown were obviously so enormous, that all the liberty that subsisted in the country was preserved only by the freedom of speech and the liberty of the press; if either of these were given up, or in any degree taken away, the only barrier that we have against the annihilation of liberty will be completely destroyed. The learned gentleman had stated, that the clause respecting private families was given up, but this boon was of a piece with the conduct of ministers in all the dreadful things they had brought upon the public. They always threatened the worst, that they might make the bad they really intended to go down more palatable. With respect to
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the traiterous correspondence clause, although altered from the opposition it met with from him and others, he could not agree to it, so long as it tended to make innocent clubs and meetings, which form a consolation to many of the industrious poor and middling class of people, liable to the penalties of the Bill. These Bills had, he observed, been called a temporary measure; in one of them the blank was not yet filled up, and the other was to continue during the King's life; this he could not consider as temporary, nor that it ought to be so, for if it really was necessary at present, it must always continue.

The question then shortly came to be, that they are called upon by ministers to pass this law upon their assertion, that a connection exists between the attack on his Majesty and the societies, without any evidence or proof of the fact. Because this Citizen Lee printed those bills, they are to conclude, without any proof, that the Corresponding Society is connected with him. They are in their usual way to fly from all enquiry, and trusting to the smallness of the minority, to carry through their desperate measures with a high hand. In the part he took it was as the advocate of human nature, and when he saw attempts to oppress the country, to lend his aid in frustrating them. He bade them recollect what was said of the American war, that we had first driven them to madness, and then quarrelled with them about the phrensy which their disease occasioned. When the people reflected on the ruin in which they had plunged us, on a conniving House of Commons, on the misfortunes and miscarriages that had happened, on the loss of lives and the waste of treasure, how could they but be galled with the pressure of the calamities which this war has brought upon them? These things considered, it was impossible for them not to suspect the conduct of that house. This was the only war during which no enquiry had taken place. Was it he would ask, because our successes had been so brilliant, so eminently conspicuous? When compared to the wars of Lord Chatham and the Duke of Marlborough, had it been so self-evidently economical, wise and prosperous from its origin, or in its management, that no inquiry was necessary, and that it merited the fullest confidence of parliament? That parliament was too full of confidence was more he said, to be lamented than wondered at. Mr. Fox adverted to the proceedings of Westminster that morning, and dwelt on the peaceable and orderly conduct of the people, who assembled in immense numbers, more than
thirty

thirty thousand; all seemingly deeply affected by their situation, shewed no inclination to riot or tumult. Upon this subject he appealed to many gentlemen on all sides, who must agree in the truth of his assertion. With regard to the Bill, he believed, when passed, it would be mere waste paper; if put in force, its effects would be horrid; they might stop, by laws, the complaints of the people, but they could never prevent the feelings of their hearts: the more that publick meetings were suppressed, the greater and stronger would be private complaints, which might at last burst forth like thunder, and the people, despairing of all other redress, might *take up arms, and demand it*. But, after what they feel already, what will they think when they are told the pretext for 'the Bill, and that the majority agreed to it without either proof of facts or the institution of an enquiry? He replied to what had been said of a gun-powder plot, and contended, that every thing known at present was equally known for the last eighteen months, and yet they could not stop even for a few to consider of this Bill, the danger is so pressing and immediate.

Mr. Fox concluded by some allusions personal to himself, the opinions he had held from the beginning of the war, and the change that had taken place in the public mind on that subject. If he had attempted to address so immense a number of people, in the year 1792, as he had met that morning, the question he said, would not have been whether he should be allowed to speak, but whether he should be suffered to exist. The heat and discontent that pervades the great mass of the people he ascribed to the conduct of ministers and their measures, the cruel and unjust prosecutions, and the mock trials in Scotland. All these, and the whole system of administration linked together, had made government odious, and altered the publick opinion. He advised them to give up the system of terror; to trace back their steps

Iterare cursus
— relinquant.

to follow the opinion of an Honourable Gentleman, often quoted, (Mr. Burke), who had said, "try all means of gentleness; terror can always be applied to, but never without danger, because if it fails in one instance, it produces contempt ever after. Mr. Fox said, he would vote with his Honourable Friend.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* began his reply, with saying, that considering the lateness of the hour, and the ample discussion these Bills would have hereafter, he should not

intrude at any great length upon the time of the house, more especially as the greater part of the Right Honourable Gentleman's speech had been employed on topics totally foreign to the subject then in discussion. The Right Honourable Gentleman had expressed himself under some obligations to administration, for restoring him to a portion of the popularity which he had lost, and had founded his claim to that popularity upon having addressed a meeting that day of thirty thousand persons, with applause.

With respect to the number of persons present at the meeting, he could not undertake to speak correctly, not having any data upon which to form an opinion. But he should advise the Right Hon. Gentleman not to be too sanguine in his calculation of their numbers, before he knew for how many of his auditors he was indebted to a reinforcement from Copenhagen House, because it was notorious that the persons who assembled at that place expressed their determination of joining the assembly of the Electors of Westminster; he would advise him to pause for a short space of time, until he knew with certainty how many of that thirty thousand were electors and householders in Westminster: he would recommend him also still to pause a little longer, until he knew in what light that meeting was considered by the people at large. All these were considerations which that Right Honourable Gentleman should reflect upon, before he boasted either of the number or the quality of the persons assembled that day in Palace-yard.

The Right Honourable Gentleman had, in his usual style of argument, contended that the House of Commons were too confiding; that there were no inquiries; it was true, that the house had declined inquiring upon mere suggestion, when there was no ground, upon which a charge either of neglect or wilful error could be founded; but it was urged as an accusation against the house, that they had placed an implicit confidence in ministers, because there had been no inquiries; and what was the ground of the charge? Not that any probable accusation had been stated, not that any real ground of inquiry had been advanced—but, because there had been inquiries in former wars.

This was a ground upon which he was sure the house would never interpose to interrupt the operations of government, more especially in a struggle like the present, when they had to contend against a body of men, whose sole motive of action almost seemed to be the hope of destroying every thing that was respectable and valuable in society, (a loud and reiterated cry of *hear! hear!* on both sides of the house, which

which the **SPEAKER** endeavoured to put a stop to, by calling both sides to order.

General Tarleton, abruptly rose, and interrupted the Chancellor of the Exchequer, complaining at the same time of partiality in the chair. He said, that the present was a very lively debate; but as it was upon subjects of so much importance to the liberties of the people, he felt himself bound to state, that the **SPEAKER** had repeatedly called gentlemen on his side of the house to order, while there was a great, if not greater, uproar on the other side. [Here several members desired that his words might be taken down.]

The *Speaker* stated, that the usual mode of proceeding, in similar cases, was for the member, whose words were desired to be taken down, to be allowed an opportunity of explaining, or re-stating them: if he did not, then any other member might state, upon his memory, what the words were. [Here there was a general call upon General Tarleton to rise, but without effect.]

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* then said, he felt it a duty he owed to the house, and to the dignity of the chair, to state, upon the best of his recollection, what the words were; he stated them to be—"Sir, I complain of partiality in the chair: I have observed the *Speaker* repeatedly call gentlemen to order on this side of the house, when the uproar has been greater on the other side of the house." These words were taken down.

Mr. *Sheridan* differed from the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his recollection of the words.

The *Speaker* implored General Tarleton, to state the words to the house.

After a few words from Mr. *Jekyll*, Mr. *Curwen*, Mr. *Fox*, and the *Chancellor of the Exchequer*, in which the uniform candour and impartiality of the *Speaker* was most clearly acknowledged:

General *Tarleton* said, that he would not rely upon his own opinion against that of the majority of the house. If, therefore, in the heat of the debate, he had dropt any expression inconsistent with the respect due to the chair, he was sorry for it.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that from the knowledge he had of the disposition of the honourable gentleman who filled the chair, he trusted he would feel himself satisfied; the Honourable General having expressed his sorrow for what he had said, in that case he hoped no trace of this affair would remain upon the journals.

The *Speaker* declared himself perfectly satisfied, and assured the house, that he had no wish to fill that chair a moment longer than he enjoyed their confidence and good opinion.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* then resumed his speech: he said, that having already disposed of what he considered as the preliminary observations of the honourable gentleman, he should not have much more to trouble the house with, because it was not his intention to anticipate the discussion upon the Bills. But late as it was, the house would excuse him, if he trespassed a little longer upon their patience, in reply to some observations of the Right Honourable Gentleman.

The Right Honourable Gentleman had stated, that the ministers had called upon parliament to pass these Bills, without laying before them any ground upon which they could be convinced of the necessity of them. He had stated before, that he would not anticipate the discussion upon these Bills; but when they did come forward, he would venture to assert, that he would lay such grounds before the house as should satisfy their minds upon the subject. It was not, he acknowledged, his intention to bring strict legal proof, such as would be necessary to convict a man of a capital offence, he would nevertheless prove it by fair reasoning, and from a general view of the state of affairs, but then the honourable gentleman asks, "why, if this danger exists, and has existed for some time, why did you suffer the *Habeas Corpus Act* to revive? did you not continue its suspension?"

Whether ministers had done right or not, in not proposing to continue the suspension, he would not undertake to say; he could however state some ground to justify their conduct. Whatever the opinion of the Right Honourable Gentleman might be of the trials for high treason, and the evidence produced upon that occasion, he was sure they had a strong effect upon the public. When that immense mass of matter was laid open, and the real designs of these societies developed, it served to open the eyes of the unwary, to check the incautious, and to deter the timid. This, when considered, and also the wretched situation to which France was reduced, so wretched, that even the French themselves complained of the tyranny under which they laboured; when these points were considered, he contended, there was fair ground for ministers to suppose, that the delusion would cease; it was therefore prudent to try the effect of a lenient measure; and what was the effect? From the moment the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus Act* was taken off, all the plans of these societies re-
vived,

vived, and continued in a progressive state till the meeting of parliament.

The Right Honourable Gentleman called for some proof to shew the connection of the meeting at Copenhagen house, and the attack upon his Majesty. He had stated before that he could not prove this by strict legal evidence, but it was almost impossible to reason fairly, and not to come to two conclusions upon the subject. What was the moment in which it was deemed proper to commit this outrage upon his majesty? One would have thought that the king's paternal fondness for his people, and his many virtues, would have rendered him secure at any time, but more especially when coming down to his parliament, when in the discharge of one of the most venerable and useful of his duties; when going to put those assemblies in motion, from which all legal redress for grievances must spring; on which the repeal of bad and the formation and maintenance of good laws must depend; this was the moment chosen for an attack upon one of the branches of the government, this was the moment fixed on for an insult upon the collective majesty of the constitution. Could it be supposed that this daring outrage was committed without hope of support from some party or other? Certainly not—with respect to the alliance supposed to be formed between the Right Honourable Gentleman and his friends with the London Corresponding Society, he wished to caution that gentleman and his friends, that that society was still persisting in its original plan for the destruction of the constitution; and the Honourable Gentleman would, without his consent, be used as a means for the attaining that end, whether it was in public meetings, for the redress of grievances, in charges of extravagance in the expenditure of public money, in accusations against ministers for a scarcity, which was the effect of unfortunate seasons, or whatever way they adopted, still the object was the same, the subversion of the constitution; upon these grounds, he trusted the house would reject the motion.

Sir *William Milner* spoke in praise of the conduct of the speaker and applauded his impartiality on all occasions. Sir *William* said, he disapproved entirely of the Bill before the house. He thought that the public should never be impeded in their wishes to meet to discuss public affairs. The manner in which the Westminster meeting was conducted that day, he thought, did them credit. He professed himself sorry to hear that there were soldiers so near the place of so peaceable and so proper an assembly of persons. Report said, that
soldiers

soldiers would be brought near to the place if any such meeting should be held in Yorkshire. To bring soldiers near a place where there was to be a meeting for political purposes, was, in his opinion, a practice of a very despotic nature; it tended to overawe the assembly, and to prevent their speaking their minds with freedom. He did not, for his own part, see any connection between the proceedings at Copenhagen-house and the attack that was made on his Majesty; an attack which he detested as much as any man in the kingdom. He expressed great contempt for the idea that a public debating society could engender treason; he desired to know what sort of treason that was which a man might go to hear on paying sixpence. If there was treason to be feared it must be where the proceedings of the conspirators were private. The punishment of all those who committed excess in consequence of political opinions, appeared to him to be sufficient as it stood.

Sir *Francis Basset* said, that he had no objection to the holding of public meetings, while they were held for constitutional purposes; but when they were confessedly held for purposes that were inimical to our constitution, it became the business and the duty of government to take care to bring the military for the purpose of suppressing tumults, if any should arise. On that day, it was said, a meeting had been held that was perfectly orderly; if that was the case, certainly there could be no occasion for the military. The military, he believed, had never been unnecessarily called out on such occasions. He was sure they never would be called out by any man without a cause, qualified to be a minister. He could not, however, agree with those who thought there was no connection between the meeting of Copenhagen-house and the outrage that was offered to his Majesty. Sir Francis said, he had heard of words that were delivered at that place, which were dangerous in themselves, and still more so from the manner in which they were delivered. The words were these, "His gracious Majesty is to meet *his* parliament on Thursday next, and I hope that you will give him a warm reception." Would any man of common sense say, that this was to be understood as applying to the applause which arose from attachment or zeal for his service? Was it not obviously for the purpose of contumely; upon the real intent of it, no man living could doubt a single moment.

Sir Francis adverted to the riot act. That act, he observed, had been passed without inquiry, upon the notoriety of the case, that mischief might otherwise arise. What was the situation of
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the country at the time? There were some persons who were known to be inimical to the king upon the throne. And it was also known that they wished to remove the king, and to put another upon the throne in his place. The danger apprehended at that time, great however as it was, was nothing to that which was to be dreaded at present. Had the family of Stuart been placed upon the throne, the whole of the constitution would not have been destroyed; the property of every individual would not have been gone; personal distinction would not have been sacrificed; and some security would have remained for the form of our government continuing. If, however, the persons who now strive against government should succeed, there would be an end at once to the very form of our constitution. The mischiefs of these clubs which it was the object of the Bill to suppress had, he said, long struck him so forcibly, and so it had many country gentlemen, like himself, that they thought the minister had been extremely remiss in not bringing some such measure as the present forward, long before that time, for the consideration of parliament. There had, indeed, been clubs for debates of questions, the discussion of which he thought perfectly harmless; for instance, "Whether Mr. Pitt or Mr. Fox was the most worthy man of the two?" In this he did not see any thing of great consequence to the public. Another question he remarked was, "Whether the present ministers deserved the confidence of the people?" This appeared also to him to be harmless. But when he read a question, which had been lately discussed, "Whether the people ought to be in a state of rebellion, in consequence of a Convention Bill passed by parliament?" he owned he saw these societies in a very different light from harmless ones. These persons must either allow parliament to be a legal or an illegal assembly: if legal they ought to exercise their authority over such daring debates; if illegal, there was an end at once of all their authority.

The extent of the present Bill, Sir Francis said, had been so much misrepresented that it did not excite his surprise at what had been said of it. Gentlemen had raised phantoms in their own imaginations, and then had combated these phantoms with all the seriousness of realities. It had been stated that no public meeting could be held if this Bill passed; surely the case was not so. The one only went to prevent meetings being held without an advertisement; and the other was to prevent debating societies where money was to be taken. With respect to the first, what objection could there be to that

that regulation? Country meetings, as he understood, generally are so managed at present; and with regard to the idea that the debate at such a meeting could not be free, he owned he saw no reason to suspect that; a magistrate would have no power to prevent the meeting while the debate was fairly conducted; if he did, he was amenable to the law; but if some power be not given to prevent the discussion of some questions such as he had heard, he would venture to say, that the constitution of this country could not last a twelvemonth longer.

The case of those who had been tried for high treason and acquitted, had, he said, escaped his attention. He found no fault with their acquittal, for they might not have done that which the law denominated treason. He must, however, protest against what had been agitated that night, with respect to juries. Gentlemen were too fond of praising juries, when their verdicts suited the side which they took in politics; and too ready to depreciate their value, if a jury was against their opinions. Thus it had happened that the verdict of English juries had been extolled, and the verdict of the Scotch jury arraigned. This was, in his opinion, a daring conduct, and what he never heard carried to such a length before that day.

Much had been said with respect to coalitions of persons of one and the other side of the house; for his part, he saw nothing improper in such coalitions. The Right Hon. Gentleman, Mr. Fox, had at one time said many severe things against a noble Lord, now no more, and yet they had afterwards coalesced; he found no fault with them for it, on the contrary, he applauded them, for he believed they did it for the public interest; but surely it must be allowed, that those who have lately joined, have done so from the same honourable motives. He concluded with observing that he should vote for the present Bill, and that he never gave a vote in his life more willingly than that which he should give that night.

Mr. Fox rose to explain what he meant with regard to the Scotch cases of sedition; he arraigned, what he conceived, the misconduct of the judges, in the mode of conducting the trials. He arraigned the severity of the sentences, and, above all, the manner in which they had been carried into execution by English ministers, who ought to have better ideas of the administration of justice, and which deserved to have been reprobated by Parliament.

The *Secretary at War* returned his thanks to Sir Francis Basset

Basset for the able manner in which he had discussed the question ; agreed with him as to the union of parties, and treated all insinuations about interested motives with contempt. He spoke highly of the pension that had been granted to Mr. Burke, whom he extolled as the most enlightened man in Europe, and to whom a statue of gold ought to be erected.—Ministers gave proof of their public spirit by granting him a pension, as much of the labour of that great man had been exerted against themselves. If such a man as Mr. Burke had been left in that indigence in which the independence of his own great mind had so long kept him, it would, he said, have been a disgrace to the country and the age in which he lived. The manner in which that gentleman had been talked of in his retirement, under his domestic affliction, he thought degrading to those who indulged in it. The character of so great a man ought to be venerated by the public.

[He was called to order. Mr. Windham confessed he had indulged his feelings perhaps irregularly, but he hoped the house would excuse him.]

Mr. *Curwen* disclaimed all ideas of personality against Mr. Burke ; but maintained, that if such a pension ought to have been given to him, ministers should have come to Parliament for that purpose.

Mr. *Sheridan* closed the debate with a reply to the several speakers against his motion ; in which he commented with great severity on the supercilious tone with which the Secretary at War affected to treat every allusion to the manner in which he and his friends had sacrificed every principle they had ever possessed. It was certainly not a very unnatural thing for gentlemen to assert, that their conduct was somewhat equivocal when they saw them squandering upon their adherents and relations the public money in the most lavish way, and accepting for themselves places without power, business, or efficiency. He had this on the authority of the pamphlet published by one of themselves, Earl Fitzwilliam, in which he affirmed, that the Duke of Portland had accepted of an office of a third secretaryship, in violation of his own Bill, without either business or power—and in doing of which he had disgraced and degraded himself. They might have shewn that their alarms were genuine, if they had given a disinterested support to government ; and surely the Hon. Secretary, if he had recollected his own language, would not so readily have dressed himself out in “a rag of the filthy dowlas of the Right Hon. Gentleman.” In regard to the pension of Mr. Burke, he would not say one word of his mer-

rit, further than that no man deserved better to enjoy a part of the public money, if pensions were at all to be given, since he had contributed so much to the ~~economy~~ economy of the national cash. The manner, however, of granting Mr. Burke's pension, he contended, was disgraceful, not only to the gentleman himself but to ministers. His own Bill had been evaded in order to grant him his pension, instead of coming for it fairly to Parliament. It was disgraceful also to the minister who had laid it upon a fund, which some years ago, being too small for the payment of certain annuities laid upon it, was eased of the old pension to the family of Mr. Pitt, and of that to the Duke of Gloucester, which were laid on the consolidated fund. Now if the four and half fund was sufficient, the public had a right to be reimbursed, instead of giving it away by new grants. Mr. Sheridan then animadverted on the way in which his question had been met by the opposite side. They had dealt out a vast number of assertions, which they desired the house to take for granted. He would do no such thing—He called on them for proof. An honourable Baronet had related a gross speech, said to be uttered at Copenhagen-house. It was, he owned, gross and highly improper—but was it spoken? A learned gentleman had produced a number of papers, said to be bought at the shop of citizen Lee, whom he called bookfeller to the London Corresponding society. He believed that citizen Lee was not the bookfeller of the Corresponding Society. Let him be proved to be so. The house had consciences, as well as the learned gentleman, and they ought to be satisfied as well as he, by having the documents before them. He concluded by saying, that surely the Honourable Chancellor of the Exchequer ought not to be the first to demolish debating societies, as he had himself profited so much from them; that the honourable gentleman had attended them so assiduously, and had not only spoken in a mask at these debating societies, but had lent a helping hand to the institution of one of them, the Lyceum in the Strand. His speech in a mask, he perhaps might recollect. It was spoken at Carlisle House, on the question, “Whether the distinction was just, which divided all mankind into two classes, knaves and fools.” What side the honourable gentleman had taken he could not say. Perhaps no man could better illustrate the position, that a little political knavery under the mask of patriotism, might for a long time impose successfully on the folly of Englishmen.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer rose to explain. He said, that some years ago the four and half fund had proved defective

tive, owing to the islands being taken. The arrears of the pensions due upon the fund had been paid by the public; but one, except the pension of the Duke of Gloucester, had been fixed on the consolidated fund. The pension in which his family were interested, still remained on the four and a half per cents.

The house then divided on the motion.

<i>Ayes</i>	-	-	22
<i>Noes</i>	-	-	167

Majority - 145

Adjourned at half past one o'clock in the morning.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

TUESDAY, *November 17.*

Petitions from the incorporation of the city of Bath, and from the town of Great Yarmouth, expressing their detestation of the seditious meetings which had been held in different parts of the country, and praying the house to adopt such measures as they might see proper for putting a stop to the disorder, were presented, and ordered to lie on the table.

The Land and Malt Tax Bills were read a third time and passed.

THE ARMY.

General M'Leod said he rose to give notice, that it was his intention to move for a return of all the troops in the British service, as well as those in this country, the colonies, &c. and of all the volunteer corps, yeomanry, &c. which had been established. That gentlemen might not complain of being taken by surprise, he would state distinctly the nature of his motion. He meant to move for a return of the army; by using the term army, he did not mean to be understood to have in view the regular troops only, but to extend the motion to troops of every description that received pay. He wished his motion to be made previous to the bringing forward of the army estimates, as a correct knowledge of the subject which his motion went to ascertain, was necessary to enable the house to judge of the expence which ought to be admitted on this department. He therefore wished to know what day was free of any business, in order that he might call the attention of the house to his motion, and give notice of it on a certain day.

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After

After some conversation between the Speaker and General M^rLeod on the subject, it appearing that every day in the week was fixed for particular business, the Speaker recommended an application to the Secretary at War, to postpone the consideration of the Army Estimates, which were to come on upon Friday, it was understood that the General would then bring forward his motion.

The report of the Bill to prevent for a limited time the distillation of grain, was ordered to be received on Friday.

The house agreed to resolve itself into a Committee of the whole house, on the Bill to prevent the exportation of Soap and Candles.

Mr. Dundas presented a petition from the Lord Provost and magistrates of the city of Edinburgh, of a similar import with those already mentioned; which was ordered to lie on the table.

BILL TO PREVENT SEDITIOUS MEETINGS.

Upon the question of the second reading of the Bill for the better preventing seditious assemblies.

The *Solicitor General* (Sir John Mitford) said, that he would not have presumed to have obtruded himself upon the attention of the house in this stage of the Bill, did not the general interest it had excited, and the misrepresentations of its tendency which had taken place, render an explanation of its principle and object peculiarly important and necessary. The first object to which it was directed was the putting a stop to those meetings, which had of late been so frequently held. The sacred freedom of speech, the privilege of which was justly reckoned so distinguished a blessing of the British constitution, had, he said, been shamefully and dangerously abused. The sincere friends of the constitution and of the privileges it bestowed would, he was persuaded, give their cordial support to a measure which professed to furnish a remedy to that disorder and abuse. Whether the provisions of the Bill were calculated to meet the evil and to accomplish its purpose, was another consideration. Its object, however, was to prevent the perversion of an important right, and to supersede the necessity of stronger restrictions upon it than the Bill was meant to impose.

The second part was intended to remedy the abuse of debating in public meetings. The particular object of this was, he said, to prevent the egregious abuse of that privilege which had of late risen to so extraordinary a height—to prevent private interest from prompting discussions of public grievances,

grievances, and to put a stop to that traffick by which an uncandid and unfair examination of abuses, a turbulent spirit of discontent, had been raised and encouraged to serve the pecuniary purposes of individuals. It was to be considered afterwards how far this clause was suited to this purpose; so far it would surely be admitted that the object of it was proper.

When the Bill was examined it would be found that if the provisions of it were defective at all, the fault was, that they did not go far enough. His own opinion was that they did not go so far, nor were so extensive in their operation as they ought to have been. The framers of the Bill, however, had been guided by the best of motives. They wished it to meet the evils against which it was levelled, and that the grand purpose would be achieved by it, that of giving a timely check to the desperate and incendiary views of these clubs and societies. With regard to the principle of the first part, the Bill went to establish the right to meet for the purpose of petitioning the legislature against any existing law, or considering any actual grievance, but to subject it to regulations, not to withdraw or impair it. It enacted that no meeting for such purposes could be held without a certain degree of previous notice. The persons at whose request it was called, would incur some degree of responsibility for the purposes pursued, and the conduct observed at such meeting. He stated the exceptions of the Bill. It was not meant to comprehend any meeting called by the Lord Lieutenant, Sheriff, *Custos Rotulorum*, &c. It did not attempt to interfere with that kind of meeting which had generally been held formerly in this country, for the constitutional purposes alluded to, and which were the only meetings fitted for the exercise of these privileges. Whether this exception went far enough was, in his mind, a matter of doubt. The Bill simply required that previous notice should be given for the purpose of explaining what is the nature of the business for which the meeting is called, and to fasten upon such persons as announced this intention a degree of responsibility which would be a pledge for the peaceableness of their designs, and the decency of their demeanour. In what way does this enactment trench upon the sacred right which the constitution bestows, or give that fatal stab to their liberties which was apprehended? He was sure that it was calculated to obstruct no meeting which either ought to be held, or which it was honest to hold. It could only mean then to prevent those meetings in which the true object skulks behind the pretext of a lawful design, and where the

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bad intention was veiled by a plausible disguise. It was to be observed also, that the meetings the Bill was framed to discourage were those chiefly where vast crowds were assembled, and where necessarily most mischief and disturbance of the public peace were likely to be generated. Even this practice was to be prohibited by existing laws, by which tumultuous petitions were prohibited, and the number of signatures to be affixed to any one petition not only greatly limited, but the object of it was required to be approved by three justices, or the grand jury. If meetings were held in defiance of the enactment of the present Bill, the assembly would be unlawful, and might be dispersed by the magistrate in like manner as he was at present entitled to disperse a mob under the riot act. The notice required the subject to be treated as he mentioned, and in order to prevent destructive views from being pursued under specious pretexts, the magistrate was empowered to judge of the purpose evidently aimed at, and authorized to put an end to the meeting, if his discretion suggested the necessity of such an exercise of authority. This was a measure which regard for the public peace rendered fit to be adopted, where it was threatened by such extravagant attempts as these meetings had encouraged, and the flagrant abuses of them which had been committed. England was, he said, the only country in the world where meetings for a similar purpose were allowed without the attendance of a magistrate. The most free states that had existed; the Roman republic itself, in the zenith of its liberty and fame, had never permitted the people to assemble but in a regular body, formally collected and under the controul of a magistrate. These provisions of the Bill, Sir John said, were all of them consistent with the spirit of our laws, and the practice of our governments. To those who would exercise it with discretion and virtue, they were calculated to preserve the enjoyment of a right by guarding against the abuse of it. The latter provisions were equally fitted to repress those lectures, and other kind of political discussions, which it was intended to prevent.

Political subjects, he said, might be discussed under the idea of an existing grievance, which the sufferers wished to have redressed, and the Bill was not introduced to prohibit such a mode of considering them. That was a right peculiar to Englishmen, a right too sacred to be disturbed on any pretence whatever. Should this privilege be extended to protect those oratorical displays of grievances heightened with misrepresentation and falsehood, to which mankind were naturally

turally induced always too implicitly to listen, and especially when such discussions, supported as they were by uncandid and untrue pictures of affairs, were meant to prove a source of pecuniary benefit to the persons by whom they were promoted; the Bill interposed a salutary preventive. One of the principles from which much of the anarchy which had desolated France resulted, was that, Mr. Solicitor said, by which it was held that every public functionary should be paid for his services by the public. The British constitution had long abandoned this principle, and had rendered all such offices gratuitous, and provided that they should be performed from disinterested views. The principle, to which he alluded, had filled France with the agents of the Jacobin club, who found their private advantage linked with the fervor of their zeal in the propagation of the doctrines of their masters. The error of adopting such an idea, the experience of a short period, marked with calamity, bloodshed, and horror, had sufficiently manifested, and had been lately renounced in France. The municipal offices were to be discharged gratuitously. It was impossible, therefore, not to perceive the impropriety of permitting or countenancing discussions, in which individuals feeling themselves interested will be disposed to advance the most dangerous and seditious artifices.

What had already been said and answered in the most satisfactory manner might be again urged. What is the necessity at the present time for adopting such measures? The answer was clear, simple, and obvious; the notoriety of the daring proceedings of seditious meetings. There was no gentleman opposite who had not heard of such assemblies, and the flagitious designs they not only entertained but publicly professed. The discussion of pretended, or even real grievances, and even the right of petitioning itself, had been employed as a medium to excite sedition and provoke discontent. The Report of the Committee of Secrecy, and the evidence adduced on the subsequent trials, contained variety of correspondence, from which it appeared that, while the intention to petition was assumed as the ostensible object, no such design seriously existed, and that very different plans were agitated. An Honourable Baronet (Sir W. Milner) whom he did not see in his place, had mentioned on a former day the case of York, alias Redhead. In that case it was proved that a meeting had been held at Sheffield for the professed purpose of petitioning, which, however it appeared, was only intended to furnish an opportunity of criminal and seditious discourse, a petition was, indeed, moved, but it was so contrived, that

the measure should be received with marks of contempt, and disapprobation, and it was accordingly negatived. York there held that seditious and criminal discourse—[here the Solicitor General was reminded by Mr. *Erskine*, across the table, that the case of York was not yet concluded, judgment not having been passed.] The Solicitor General thought that though it might be improper to make any observations on a case in which judgment still depended, he was entitled to call that discourse seditious, because the jury had found it so to be. In what manner then was this Bill to apply to meetings actuated by similar dispositions? It would not prevent the sober discussion of a real petition, but it would prevent the introduction of discourses, and guard against the perversion of meetings which were likely to lead to such purposes as those to which he had referred. The magistrates on perceiving their real views, or hearing such discussion as betrayed their object, would instantly disperse them, while the magistrate himself was better protected in the execution of his duty by the authority which it allowed him to exercise, and the force against resistance with which he was invested.

The recent instance of the Westminster meeting had been adduced to shew that great bodies of people might assemble in the exercise of a constitutional right, and conduct themselves with suitable propriety and order. Without adverting particularly to the instance, he would ask, whether such a meeting might not have taken place even had this Bill been passed into a law? Would not such a number of householders have come forward to give notice of the meeting as would have rendered it consistent with the law, and the same conclusion have taken place, and the same good effects been obtained? How then could the Bill be represented as subversive of the best privileges of the people of England, or as stabbing the principles of the constitution?

Perhaps it might be said, that the inconsiderable number of men to whom these seditious principles and designs were ascribed, could not be so formidable as to sanction such a measure. Sir John declared, he felt the highest pleasure in reflecting that their numbers were comparatively inconsiderable; but inconsiderable as they were, they might nevertheless be capable of doing infinite mischief. He observed that it had been laid down as a maxim, by the writers of their own sentiments, that all revolutions were effected by minorities. One of the most distinguished members of the Constituent Assembly, (*D'Andre*) had remarked, that the active, persevering spirit of the few would always triumph over the peaceable

peaceable and inactive disposition of the more numerous class of the community. Considering the boldness which they manifested, the desire of magnifying their own number and importance, and their assumption of a formidable appearance, the small number of people who composed these societies, was no reason to shew that the Bill was less required by the occasion. The incessant activity of their machinations and enterprizes, rendered it necessary for government to embrace strong measures to oppose their progress.

Some of the gentlemen on the opposite side had said, why adopt extraordinary measures? Had not the government of former times been protected by the existing laws? It was true that during periods of danger, the existence of the constitution had been adequately defended by these laws, with this difference, as was well observed by an Honourable Baronet (Sir Francis Bassett), that the object of these men was the total destruction of the constitution; that of the friends of the Stuarts only the change of the sovereign; liberty, religion, and property, if the present objects of the societies were attained, were to be overthrown. Representative government is the demand of the Corresponding Society, as was proved on the state trials. To these principles and their consequences they still adhere. In France it had been found impossible to maintain a government on the principle of universal suffrage. The constitution of 1791, in recognising that doctrine, sealed the doom of the monarchy, and the fate of the king became inevitable. Does not the present period then, Sir John asked, particularly call on the house to adopt measures to prevent their introduction and propagation in this country, the consequence of which would be anarchy, confusion, and bloodshed—the overthrow of every sacred establishment, and the outrage of every human and moral feeling.

It had been said, that the existing laws were sufficient, and it has been asked, why had not prosecutions been instituted against the authors of the crimes complained of? Prosecutions had, in some cases, taken place, but it was a matter of infinite difficulty to obtain that evidence which was necessary to conviction. The number of offences made prosecutions of all the offenders almost impossible, and even upon the existing laws, prosecutions would have occasioned great public expence. The existing laws were undeniably defective, as they did not reach the societies from which the evil originated. It was therefore the policy and the intention of the present Bill at once to provide against the deficiency of

the laws, by other means than punishment, and by preventing the meetings to anticipate all the mischief they occasion. Under these impressions he would support the second reading of the Bill.

The question being put,

Mr. *Erskine* said, he found it extremely difficult to reconcile what he had heard from the Honourable and learned gentleman who had just sat down, with what he had heard from gentlemen on the opposite side of the house, on the night when the house granted leave to bring in the Bill. It was not his intention to trespass on the rules of the house, by referring in any particular manner, to speeches that had been delivered in former debates upon this measure; but when leave had been asked to bring in the Bill, an honourable Gentleman, he understood, had said, that the criminal law of the land was amply sufficient for these two purposes; the security of the government, and the comfort of the people, but that a particular conjuncture of affairs had arisen, which made it at this time necessary to enact the present law. The Honourable and learned Gentleman, however, had that day taken a different course; he had asserted, that the present Act was strictly consonant to the principles of the constitution; an act never thought of in the reign of Charles the Second, after the horrors and confusion of the former reign; an act never dreamt of in the reign of King William, when the government was newly established, during a disputed succession, or in the two rebellions that raged in the subsequent reigns; an act which even the present ministry never thought of passing, when they suspended that grand palladium of English liberty, the *Habeas Corpus* Act; nor when they had the reports of committees, stating the existence of treasonable plots, upon their table. Upon what grounds had the learned Solicitor General defended the necessity of passing the present Bill? Upon any fresh treason that existed? Upon any new plots? No. Instead of adducing new evidence, instead of going over the new conspiracies, that were supposed to be hatching, the learned gentleman had trodden the dull track that he had trodden so often before, and had travelled back again to the meeting that had been held near Sheffield, in which Mr. Yorke, it had been asserted, made a speech highly seditious. Upon that assertion he was glad to find, that the learned gentleman had taken a hint from him, and had desisted from pursuing a subject, the impropriety of which, in the present circumstance of Mr. Yorke, being about to receive

ceive the judgment of the Court of King's Bench, he must be fully convinced.

The learned gentleman out of his bounty had been pleased to say, that he allowed the right of the subject to petition the king and parliament, and that he considered that right not to be taken away by the present Bill; not only not to be taken away, but even to be rendered safer by it. In contradiction to this position, he would maintain, positively and distinctly, that the Bill did absolutely destroy the right of the subject to petition. It was a maxim of law when any thing was prohibited by law, the means by which such thing might be done were also prohibited: on the contrary, when the law permitted a thing to be done, it also permitted all the means by which such thing might be done. This was one of the clearest maxims of law, and by this maxim he desired that the present Bill might be examined. In the first part of the Bill an exception was contained, which, it had been contended, was sufficient to preserve the freedom of the country; it excepted meetings called by lord lieutenants, sheriffs, and justices of peace in their particular districts. The constitution of England was, he said, made up of balanced, mixed, and opposing powers; the prerogatives of the crown and the right of the people were equally poised, consequently, the right of petitioning, perhaps against arbitrary measures, will be rendered nugatory by this Bill. According to its enactments, no subject was to be discussed, which the magistrates did not approve; thus, those magistrates who are appointed by, and removeable at, the will of the crown, (such as sheriffs, &c.) are to be the judges of the nature of their petitions. The magistrates who represent majesty, will therefore never permit the people to meet for the purpose of petitioning against a measure of high prerogative, or in any case where the king may be supposed not to consult the happiness of his people. Will any man pretend that this is not a flagrant invasion of the peoples' privilege, and absolutely destructive of the very existence of the constitution, composed of mixed and separate parts? a direct and gross violation of the Bill of Rights, on the maintenance of which his majesty holds his title to the crown? Those, therefore, who advise his majesty to the measure, bring his title into question; and advise him to a breach of his coronation oath, by thus destroying the unqualified and undeniable right of the people to petition. Did the Honourable and learned Gentleman, he would ask, find in the Bill of Rights, that the right of assembling and petitioning had been a right claimed with such firmness, and contended for with so much

glorious struggle, as a right to be exercised with the permission of magistrates or even of the king himself? But the principles of the constitution and the Bill of Rights, were all forgotten; the principle of alarm seemed to justify every violation of the liberties of the people, and to afford a sufficient pretence of laying waste all the wisdom of our ancestors.

An Honourable Gentleman had said, that there was no country in Europe where meetings were allowed to be held without the interposition of the magistrate; no, not in ancient Rome: for his part, he did not wish to look abroad for governments; he wished only to support the British constitution sacred and inviolable, as he found it delivered into his hands, and as it stood at the Revolution. He was to do his duty as a member of the British Parliament: he was not then to consider what government was best; he wished to support that which was already established, and which had stood the test of ages. It was one thing to make a government, it was another to rob the people of their rights; which, if government dared attempt, the people would be justified in resisting such glaring oppression. He would say, again and again, that it was the right of the people to resist that government which exercised tyranny. It had been said, that bold language was held at public meetings; it was certainly bold to say, that the people had a right to resist, and that they ought to rise; but there were some occasions which rendered the boldest language warrantable.

In his attempt to prove the seditious views of the societies, the learned Solicitor General had neither cited any of the speeches that had been delivered at Copenhagen house, nor had he even brought down his own Old Bailey speech; but the people were discontented, and would not be quiet. Upon this subject he would read the opinion of a man of the highest abilities and authority; a man whose talents and whose eloquence were of that superior kind, that every thing that came from him, came with a weight that rendered it almost irresistible; he meant the late Earl of Chatham. In the year 1770, when a motion was made by the Marquis of Rockingham, relative to the discontents that had broken out, which discontents he imputed not to any conspiracy of the people against the government, but to a conspiracy of the government against the people; that great man, Lord Chatham, had said,

If we mean seriously to unite the nation within itself, we must convince them, that their complaints are regarded, and that their grievances shall be redressed;

dress'd. On that foundation I would take the lead in recommending peace and harmony to the people. On any other, I would never wish to see them united again. If the breach in the constitution be effectually repaired, the people will of themselves return to a state of tranquillity. If not—**MAY DISCORD PREVAIL FOR EVER!** I know to what point this doctrine and this language will appear directed; but I feel the principles of an Englishman, and I utter them without apprehension or reserve. The crisis is indeed alarming—so much the more does it require a prudent relaxation on the part of government. If the King's servants will not permit a constitutional question to be decided on, according to the forms, and on the principles of the constitution, it must then be decided in some other manner; and, rather than it should be given up, rather than the nation should surrender their birth-right to a despotic minister, I hope, my Lords, old as I am, 'I shall see the question brought to issue, and **FAIRLY TRIED BETWEEN THE PEOPLE AND THE GOVERNMENT!**'

With the sanction of the sentiments of the venerable and illustrious Earl of Chatham, he would maintain that the people of England should defend their rights, if necessary, by the last extremity to which freemen could resort. For my own part, said Mr. Erskine, I shall never cease to struggle in support of liberty. In no situation will I desert the cause. I was born a free man and by God I shall never die a slave.

That the question should be decided by such a contest, he declared he did not wish: never would he do or say any thing that did not tend to avert the horrors of a revolution; a calamity which the supporters of the Bill affected to fear, though that Bill was the most likely method to produce it.

In the whole of the late proceedings and events, one of the most fatal things had been, that the higher orders of the people separated themselves too much from the lower orders. This had been one of the causes of the revolution in France. Under their arbitrary monarchs there were literally but two classes of the people; a pampered, profligate, proud nobility, and a low, miserable, and abject rabble; no intermediate class, no knowledge, no virtue. It was to this that all the horrors and calamities that followed the French revolution, were to be attributed. To look back to the wretched state of the French people, divided only into the two classes that he had described, it would be seen, that man, by degrees, feeling the dignity of his nature, roused at constant disgrace and persecution, shook off the trammels of despotism, and asserted his rights. The people drew a parallel, which, when he considered their enlightened minds, appeared to him to be astonishing; they drew a parallel between the state of France and this country. France had an unreformed church, and an unreformed state;

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a profligate despotism, and the most profound superstition. There were no gentle gradations of rank; and the government rose not, as had been said, by a celebrated writer of the English government, from a broad base to a point. Where was the parallel between such a country and such a government, and the country and constitution of England? Why did ministers not come forward with this measure when France was distracted by that anarchy, from which all the principles so prejudicial to this country had arisen? When they came forward with triumphant descriptions of the improvement of the French constitution, instead of availing themselves of that opportunity of sailing into the harbour of peace, and putting an end to the miseries of a most disastrous war, instead of recommending the constitution to the love of the people, by an experience of its practical blessings, instead of the higher ranks endeavouring by the tenderness of their behaviour, to draw the lower orders back to content and to happiness, a Bill was brought forward which outraged every principle of freedom, and overthrew the very foundation of the constitution? Let any lawyer shew that this Bill was consonant to the principles of the constitution? He defied the whole profession to prove it. The constitution was abrogated, and annulled by it. The Bill would not allow the people to meet without advertising their intention, and surely this was a very extraordinary circumstance. The people are the proper judges of the grievances under which they labour. They may think the measures of administration a grievance, yet the magistrate is to be the judge of the nature of the complaint, however respectful and inoffensive, and may even pronounce a requisition which censured the ruinous measures of a minister, or proposed a reformation of abuses, a crime against the law.

Our ancestors were content to wait till some overt act appeared, which was the subject of punishment. But, under this Bill, the determination of a magistrate is to interfere between the people and the assertion of their rights and the complaint of their grievances. Depend upon it, said Mr. Erskine, the people of England, unless they are lost to all sense of freedom, and of national honour, *will not*, and *ought not* to submit.

He stated the power which the law bestowed upon magistrates, of arbitrarily judging of the intention of the people; and even lest he himself might be responsible for the consequences of any meeting, the necessity a virtuous magistrate might be under of dispersing a meeting of the best men with
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the purest views. He likewise stated various absurdities which resulted from the authority bestowed by the Bill on magistrates.

He would suppose that at such a meeting as had been convened, in the manner alluded to, he spoke with severity of the evils that existed; and with firmness of the grievances under which the people laboured; he would suppose that he said, what the minister himself once said, viz. that as long as the Parliament remained unreformed, no wise and virtuous administration could exist: he would suppose that he did this, could the magistrate disperse the meeting? He affirmed that he might disperse it, and could not be punished.

One of the clauses of the Bill stated, that "in case such meeting shall, by reason of any special circumstances, become dangerous to the public peace, in the judgment of two or more justices of the peace, &c." Here was a discretion given to the magistrates of the most dangerous kind. Where, he begged to know, did the Solicitor General find a precedent of so broad a discretion given before to magistrates? A discretion too for which they could not be punished; because, when the law placed any thing in the discretion of a magistrate, it could not punish him for any mistake which he might commit in the exercise of that discretion? If it was the intention of the minister to prevent the people from meeting, for the purpose of proposing any alteration in church or state, or of exercising dislike to the King's person and government, there was no necessity for the present Bill; and the provisions inserted in it, for the purpose of producing such an effect, ought to be blotted out. The fact was, that they were determined to give the magistrates the power of dispersing public meetings. He would, he said, proceed to shew the gross and abominable absurdity of this part of the Bill.

Suppose thirty or forty of the most respectable magistrates in the country; suppose even that the twelve judges of England were to join in proposing a meeting; two hired, hungry, jobbing justices might disperse them all. Could a criminal information be filed against such magistrates for so doing? The Court of King's Bench had determined a case that very morning, that might be applied in the present instance, and which was sufficient to establish the legal principle of the clause in question. A law had been passed in the reign of James the First, authorising the magistrates to search for a particular kind of leather. Upon this law a search had been ordered by a magistrate, a seizure had been made; and, upon examination, the person from whom the leather had been seized had been acquitted: a question arose, whether an action would

would lay against the magistrate for having ordered such a seizure? It had been decided in the affirmative, because the particular law gave no discretion to the magistrate. It would be much more manly, much more consistent with truth and candour, to come forward and tell the people of England that they were not any longer to presume to arrogate or to enjoy such privileges, than to insult their understandings by telling them they retain that liberty of which they feel themselves deprived. He would ask how they could petition for the redress of grievance without communication. He had in his hands an address to the jury at the Old Bailey, which would shew that no conspiracy had existed, and that the opinion of the judge had not been as represented. The Chief Justice says—

“All men may, nay, all men must, if they possess the faculty of thinking, reason upon every thing which sufficiently interests them to become objects of their attention; and, among the objects of the attention of free men, the principles of government, the constitution of particular governments, and, above all, the constitution of the government under which they live, will naturally engage attention and provoke speculation. The power of communication of thoughts and opinions is the gift of God, and the freedom of it is the source of all science, the first fruits and the ultimate happiness of society; and therefore it seems to follow, that human laws ought not to interpose, nay, cannot interpose, to prevent the communication of sentiments and opinions in voluntary assemblies of men.”

From this it was evident that the judge considered voluntarily communication as not only lawful but as a right which could not be taken away.

He next commented upon the contents of the preamble to the Bill, and contended, that the most abominable and tyrannous act had always been passed under the pretence of making the subjects happiness the ground for the measure. Other matters were also to be considered in the provisions of the act: it was in the power of any one man, by going to a meeting, and speaking a few seditious words, whether apposite to the subject or not, to afford a warrantable reason for a justice to dissolve the meeting; any man whatsoever, though he be not one who signed the notice, or who called the meeting; any spy, (and magistrates had their spies) with half-a-crown in his pocket might go, and, by uttering seditious expressions, afford his paymaster the power of putting an end to all discussion, and to the meeting. He said he considered the law of the land as fully adequate to all the purposes of good government, without the introduction of the present measure. In any public meeting, when a breach of the peace was committed,

mitted, a magistrate, by the existing law, was entitled to interfere; and in his support, and was authorised to raise the *posse comitatus*, if necessary: and also by the riot act, he had likewise the power of dispersing tumultuous assemblies: where then was the necessity for introducing a new law, and giving a vital stab to the constitution?

The Solicitor General had observed, that prosecutions had little effect, and under that pretence, licensing acts Mr. Erskine said, were to be introduced. All laws, in all governments, even the most despotic, in their preamble, pretend to be dictated for the good of the people; and however the Bill and its supporters might assume that pretence, it was to be judged by its natural tendency. Was it consonant with the spirit of the constitution, that men met for the best of purposes, should be dispersed, if a ministerial spy thought proper to propound some point which appeared exceptionable to the magistrate? Let gentlemen consider what the present laws were by which the constitution was defended. If it required new sanctions, he would willingly join in framing them; he would however adapt his remedies to the discontents and disaffection of the people upon principles suited to the nature of a free state, and of the nature of our own constitution. Mr. Burke, whose talents he revered, and who had displayed his wonderful powers for years, in opposition to the Right Honourable Gentleman, by a most unfortunate coincidence of opinion, had of late recommended himself to his favour; that great man when speaking of the American war with all those graces of oratory which would carry down his fame to posterity with that of the fairest productions of Grecian and Roman eloquence, had expressed himself in terms peculiarly applicable to the present time. His words were these:

"It is not very difficult for well formed minds to abandon their interest; but the separation of fame and virtue is an harsh divorce. Liberty is in danger of being made unpopular to Englishmen. Contending for an imaginary power, we begin to acquire the spirit of domination; and to lose the relish of honest equality. The principles of our forefathers become suspected to us, because we see them animating the present opposition of our children. The faults which grow out of the luxuriance of freedom, appear much more shocking to us, than the base vices which are generated from the rankness of servitude. Accordingly the least resistance to power appears more inexcusable in our eyes, than the greatest abuses of authority. All dread of a standing military force is looked upon as a superstitious panic. All shame of calling in foreigners and savages in a civil contest is worn off. We grow indifferent to the consequences inevitable to ourselves, from the plan of ruling half the empire by a mercenary sword. We are taught to believe that a desire of

domineering over our countrymen is love to our country; and those who hate civil war abet rebellion; and that the amiable and conciliatory virtues of lenity, moderation, and tenderness to the privileges of those who depend on this kingdom, are a sort of treason to the state."

This was not a pompous display of theoretical observations, but a series of wise and political reflections, meant to have a real and practical consequence.

"Gentlemen," exclaimed Mr. Erskine, "will see by this, that the word *Equality* is not a word of new coinage, and introduced into the dictionary only three years ago, but a word of long and ancient usage, and stamped with the sanction of such an authority as that of Mr. Burke. In my opinion, the higher ranks do ill in thus seceding from the lower. If the latter have swerved from their duty, would it not be better for the former to rally them round the principles of the constitution, and lead them back to their duty, than thus to make, as it were, a separate cause against them? Let those higher ranks recollect what must be the certain consequence of any contest between them and the lower ranks. Such a contest, I am sure, I deprecate sincerely; and it is because I sincerely deprecate it, that I thus wish the higher ranks to take it into their most serious contemplation. What distraction has seized the house. You have said, that from the convulsed state of France you expect better terms of peace. Will she not act in the same manner with you? If you give her reason to suppose that you are convulsed, will she not expect better terms of peace from you on account of such convulsions? Good God! because a prince, whose morals make him dear to every man in the nation, was going down to his parliament during a war that has snatched the bread from the mouths of the poor; because, in the crowd that surrounds him, there is one man, miscreant enough to offer an outrage to that prince; because, I say, the outrage committed by that one man, and which I affirm is punishable by the statute of Edward III. is to be charged against the whole people of England, and we are to be deprived of our most valuable rights and privileges. As there is always a disposition to exaggerate events, the French will be induced, by our proceedings, to form an idea that a wish to change the government of the country, and to introduce such a constitution as that of France actually exists in England, and they will make you spend twenty millions more in the prosecution of the war.

Mr. Erskine entered into a legal argument, to prove that the offences recapitulated in the present Bill could be punished

punished by the existing laws, and that those laws were amply sufficient.

The 13th of Charles II. was admitted to be the precedent of the Bill, but it must not go the same length. Under that act 100,000 persons might assemble, and sign any petition to the King or the Parliament voluntarily; but the act prevented persons from hawking about petitions to persons to sign; who might not know that any grievances existed. It also provided, that not more than ten persons should present any petition to the king. It only authorised magistrates to interfere when an overt act of tumult took place, or to require security if danger to the peace was apprehended; but it never prohibited a meeting to be held; it did not forbid voluntary communication, but prohibited tumultuous petitioning: this Bill prohibits petitioning upon grievances which actually exist. An unreformed parliament had been alluded to. The language of the minister once had been, "That we had lost America by the corruption of an unreformed parliament; and that we should never have a wise and honourable administration, nor be freed from the evils of unnecessary war, nor the fatal effects of the funding system, till a radical reform was obtained." The Right honourable Gentleman had in that prediction shewn his prophetic power; for, to such a parliament was owing that detestable, ruinous, and destructive war into which the honourable Gentleman had plunged the country. The Right honourable Gentleman would, however, brand with the imputation of sedition all who employed the same language that he himself once had held, or who expressed their discontent at the fatal measures of his administration. That the societies should complain of this evil, was surely not to be wondered at. Though they had complained, he would ask had they raised the standard against the constitution of the country? In arguing this question, he desired not to be answered by old musty records that had been produced on the trials, by that mass of matter which so wearied the patience of every man who was present when it was produced, or by those letters which had been read upon every subject. He desired not to be answered by such documents; because he contended that, in the trials that had occurred, the issue that had been joined was, whether the real object of the societies was a reform in parliament, or whether that was only a pretence to cover traitorous designs against the constitution? The Chief Justice Eyre had alluded to this issue in his charge to the grand jury, when he had said, "If there be ground to consider that the reform of parliament had been a mere colour

four or pretext laid hold of as a design against the government of the country, in that case he had already stated what his opinion was upon that subject; and the only question in such event would be, Whether or not the matter of fact could be proved?" The Chief Justice had further said, that "if these associations meant nothing more than a redress of grievances, and to have nothing else in view, then of course no charge could be made against them." The issue, therefore, was, whether the real object of the societies was a reform in parliament, or a design to destroy the constitution? The indictment against the prisoners expressly charged them with holding a convention with a view to depose the King, and to destroy the constitution. The jury by acquitting them had decided that no such design to destroy the constitution existed. Their verdict was not given from a disagreement with the judge on the point of law, but they had founded it on the principle of the fact, that had been alledged, not having been proved.

He had said, secondly, that the existing laws were sufficient for the punishment of the offences recapitulated in the present Bill, because, if persons assembled for any unlawful purpose, those assemblies were unlawful assemblies, and might be punished as such. If there were tumultuous proceedings, the magistrates, under the statute of Henry IV. (which Lord Mansfield, in the case of Lord George Gordon, held to be still in force), might take sureties from persons guilty of such proceedings, and might assemble the *passe comitatus* to disperse such tumultuous meetings. He therefore contended, that no man could be guilty of any of the overt acts that had been mentioned, without being affected by the laws as they now existed.

There was, lastly, the Riot Act, the provisions of which were fully sufficient for the dispersing of illegal meetings. By the laws as they now stood, it was necessary that a person should be actually doing an unlawful act, in order to subject him to punishment; in the case of the King against Boyce, it was held, that though the defendant had not been actually concerned in the pulling down of mills, yet, as he had taken part in the meeting of persons so employed, waved his hat, and approved of the proceedings, he came within the meaning of the act, and was held to be guilty of felony. On the whole view of the subject therefore, Mr. Eskiné said, he was clearly of opinion that the existing laws were amply sufficient; that they did not require any extension, and that there was not the least necessity for the present Bill. That Bill he felt to be a daring attack upon the principles of the constitution: he felt and saw also, that ministers, at a time when every thing

thing should be done to restore harmony and peace to the country, were adopting measures that not only tended to produce such an effect, but tended to swell the sum of public grievance, and to lay the foundation for fresh discontents in the minds of the people.

Mr. *Milbank* said, the riot act already authorised any magistrate, mayor, or sheriff, to disperse any meeting composed of twelve persons or more, suspected of assembling for tumultuous purposes, and if those persons did not immediately disperse, when so commanded, they were guilty of felony; he therefore should oppose the second reading of the Bill. The Bill, he feared, might be made use of for bad and pernicious purposes, and suffer many an error to creep into the state; and upon these principles, convinced that there was already a strong and satisfactory resistance to every probable evil, of the nature adverted to in the Bill, by the law as it now stands. After a few words more, Mr. *Milbank* said, he would not detain the House any longer, but gave his public and decided negative to the question.

Mr. *Amstutcher* rose to reply to several parts of his honourable and learned friend's Speech, the whole of which he thought had been more laboured and in detail than was necessary in that stage of the Bill. He said, his sincere wish was, that the Bill might meet with a full and ample discussion of its merits; and that the House, after adverting to the circumstances of the present day, and the nature of the measure proposed, should fairly and temperately consider and decide whether there existed a necessity of any interference on their part; and, if their did exist such a necessity, whether the Bill in question was the proper step to be taken.

The honourable and learned gentlemen, who spoke last but one (Mr. *Erskine*) had attempted to trace the Bill up to a general system of separating the rich from the poor, as if the former were set up in battle array against the latter. To this he must give the most direct and unequivocal contradiction; on the contrary, he would assert, that there was associations formed of all classes of people, for the suppression of Jacobins and Jacobin principles; and that the wealthy and higher orders were, in conjunction with the lower, standing forward equally in defence of the great mass of the people, against the dissemination and progress of mischievous principles which threatened to destroy all ranks, and bury them in one common ruin. The same Gentleman had laid it also down as a fundamental proposition, that the liberty of the subject was taken away by the Bill; because, when the law prohibited

hibited any thing, it prohibited at the same time every manner of doing it; hence inferring the converse of the proposition, that what it permitted, was permitted in every way; and therefore, in restraining the right of public meetings in any way, the principle was so far violated. In answer to this Mr. Anstruther said, he must take the liberty of declaring that the learned gentleman was mistaken; for though nothing was clearer than that the law prohibited every manner of doing that which was forbidden, yet the inverse of that proposition could never be maintained, that what it permitted it allowed to be done in every manner. In proof of which he referred the House to the very Bill depending, where public meetings were permitted with certain formularies, but were forbidden without them. His Honourable and Learned Friend had, nevertheless, contended, that a lawful act could never be done in an unlawful manner, and seemed to found his opposition to the Bill on that general argument, maintaining, that it was an abridgment of the hitherto acknowledged liberties of the country.

The major proposition was not only invalid, but his honourable and learned friend's minor was so likewise; the country having never before been in a similar predicament to the present, consequently, could not before require that abridgment. Supposing for a moment that the Bill were an abridgment of the liberties of the people, no precedent of the same effect could be stated, because no similar case could be instanced. His honourable and learned friend had also said, that the Bill would take away all right of petition, because two magistrates, in the exercise of the discretion invested in them, might disperse the meeting previous to its deliberation or resolutions, on trivial, capricious, and unfounded grounds, and yet was not liable to be called to account for so doing. The honourable and learned gentleman was here again mistaken; because, in this case, as in any other abuse of power, magistrates would be subject to account and punishment, if they should presume to disperse any public meeting without fair, reasonable, and good grounds.

His honourable and learned friend had, Mr. Anstruther observed, attempted to fasten a contradiction on his Honourable and learned friend (the Solicitor General) who maintained that the Bill was not only consistent with the liberty of the people, but that it protected and preserved that liberty. This he thought perfectly reconcilable, when fairly stated, inasmuch as the Bill left every useful and constitutional liberty untouched, and only restrained the pernicious excess
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and abuse of it. Much stress, he remarked, had been laid on the novelty of the measure, and it had been roundly asserted, that it was unknown to the constitution; he wished to remind the House, that new circumstances must always originate new measures in every legislature, that was watchful, and did it its duty; he denied that it was unknown in principle, and asserted, that at all times the constitution contained a principle of exertion adequate to every emergency, and its own protection in particular. The general principle was to allow as much liberty as was consistent with its own security, and the real welfare of the subject; but the actual *quantum* had often fluctuated in the course of our history, as emergencies arose. The Statute of Treasons, so much relied on, the 25th of Edward III. expressly says, "that when new cases arise, recourse must be had to parliament;" and in later times, particularly since the reign of Elizabeth, parliament had interfered in cases much more similar than was generally imagined; they had enacted laws to condemn dangerous tenets, and annexed penalties. This was always done where powerful and active parties attempted to carry dangerous opinions into practical effect. It was to be recollected, that these laws were made solely from motives of political prudence, unconnected with moral guilt. What moral offence was it, for example, to deny the King's title to the crown, or to call him a heretic? History had shewn, that these opinions were connected with very wide and deep-rooted practical consequences, and therefore they were condemned, forbidden, and made penal in the highest degree. The same prudent policy of our ancestors had gone further, and had looked to the connection of such tenets with the power and disposition of foreign states, and relaxed or strengthened their measures accordingly.

In the reigns of Charles II. William III. and George I. frequent instances of this interference were to be found. The measure was, therefore, in principle, directly warranted by precedent and experience. The severity of the punishment had also been cited as objectionable; but in the cases alluded to, equal if not greater severity was to be found. If there had not been precisely such a Bill, it was because no such precise evil ever existed before; but through the whole current of history, we saw the Parliament at times meeting every new evil with new laws, and by so doing our ancestors had laid down the principle, and given us the example. In the reign of Edward VI. a more severe act was passed; and to it we owe the preservation of the reformed religion in our church;

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by which any person who circulated hand-bills, which brought a meeting together, who entered into resolutions inimical to the reformed religion, or called a meeting together by sounding a trumpet, even though he absented himself from the meeting, was answerable for every thing which was done there, and liable to the penalties of high treason, if any thing treasonable passed at such meetings, so convened. What he would be glad to know, would the honourable gentleman mean to establish by his argument, that, when rebellious and civil wars existed, no such harsh measures were adopted? Did he mean, that we should wait for such an event to apply a remedy? Should we wait to see the calamitous scenes which passed in France re-acted here? Should we wait until a mild and amiable monarch should be led to the block? or, should we not prevent such threatened evils by a timely and temperate interference? Ought government to abdicate itself, by permitting the designs of factious men to overthrow the constitution?

He quoted the speech of the Speaker's predecessor to his Majesty upon passing the act to prevent tumultuous petitioning, wherein he traced the footsteps of rebellion and regicide, and described the evils of sedition, as pouring upon the country, like the waves of the ocean, from the most humble petition to the most outrageous and illegal demands. He hoped that we had no occasion for a repetition of the scene, but we should have wisdom enough to profit by the example already passed. The question, however, really was, did there exist a necessity for the Bill? To those who saw no danger in the propagation of the tenets of the societies, so often alluded to in the course of the discussion; to those who thought there was nothing new or improper in meetings, the avowed object of which were discussions, and speeches, tending to defame and degrade the constitution, the parliament, and the king; to those he would not address himself: but would ask the bulk of the house, whether there ever was a period in which a question was discussed, in the manner the present question was discussing? With respect to the argument, drawn by his honourable and learned friend, from the charge of the judge, and the verdicts of the juries, on the trials of the supposed conspirators, he would only say, that the finding of the grand jury was a proof of the existence of the conspiracy, while the verdicts of the juries went only to the exculpation of individuals charged with being accomplices; it would therefore be absurd for them to say, that they must stop from applying remedies to the fact, because the guilt of an individual was not estab-

blished; for the office of a legislator was governed by very different principles from that of a juror. With regard to the conspiracy, the moral probability remained the same, and the verdicts of the juries did not at all impeach the report of the secret committee.

Could the house possibly forget the transactions of the London Corresponding Society? Had it escaped gentlemen recollection, that they had formerly decided not to petition Parliament; that they represented the government and constitution merely as impositions and grievances on the public; that they were chiefly employed in disseminating writings subversive of both; and that on the murder of Louis the Sixteenth, they addressed the National Convention, saying, that that unhappy country had arrived at the crisis in which they could properly address them?

They came at length, it seemed, to a resolution to petition the king in his way to Parliament. In the course of his passage there, he was grossly insulted, and treated with atrocious violence. It had been contended, and he was willing to admit, that there was no legal connection between the previous meeting and the outrage committed on that occasion; but there was a high degree of probability that the one proceeded from the other. There was, in fact, a natural connection between the principle avowed and dispersed at that meeting, and the fact that followed. Whether or no the paper intitled KING-KILLING was espoused and circulated at that meeting, Jacobin principles were asserted to the utmost extent; and the former doctrine was only an inference from them.

So far had they carried their principles, that they even found fault with the government of France, as not being sufficiently Jacobinical, since it admitted a distinction between those who had property and those who had none; a distinction which Mr. Thelwall had publicly declared to be *infamous*; and regretted that he had not the voice of Stentor to make himself heard in every part of the assembly. They came to a resolution at the meeting to petition the king, and address the nation. The petition not having been noticed, they declared afterwards, that it was either suppressed or passed over with unfeeling contempt. The first alternative related obviously to ministers, whom they charged with the new offence of high treason against the rights and liberties of the people. The other alternative related as clearly to his majesty, whom they pronounced unworthy of respect, if he did not attend to the happiness and liberty of his people, and then insinuated that he had betrayed his trust. The conse-

quence of these conditions and arguments was obvious, and led to the more dangerous effects. Such arguments to a mixed meeting of 40,000 persons, could produce nothing but ill humour, and excite disloyalty and treason.

Mr. Anstruther read an extract from one of the publications of the society, in which they declare, "That the only powerful, but solitary, argument in favour of our constitution, was the virtues of the monarch, of which they, however, had not experienced the benefits."

Hence Mr. Anstruther argued, that the present circumstances called loudly for some legislative interference; it remained, therefore, to enquire, whether the Bill before the house was such a one as they ought to adopt under the present circumstances? The act would not, he said, prevent any public meeting called by sheriffs, magistrates, or corporations; the principal, if not the only meetings antiently, publickly, and hitherto known to, or recognized by, the constitution. It even authorised others, under certain conditions, if notice be given by three householders. That notice, indeed, must be public; but not as his honourable and learned friend had stated, given to a magistrate; the act contained no such specific condition. They must, besides, further assign the object; and what restraint was it to the known constitutional meetings of the country, to enact that it should not be held if the object was, on the face of it, seditious? The magistrate might, however, disperse it, if, for whatsoever ostensible cause it was called, the deliberations, or resolutions, became seditious; they well knew that, under many fair pretences, such as parliamentary reform, or redress of grievances, sedition, and even treason, have been the main object of attention; it was necessary therefore to provide that, however ostensible and fair the pretence for the meeting, it should not degenerate from its avowed purpose.

One of the clauses prohibited political lectures where money was taken; this was meant, and surely properly meant to check the pernicious practices of disseminating sedition under the unsuspecting garb of amusement and instruction. At these places the doctrine of holy insurrection and sovereignty were blended with amusement; but, in endeavouring to restrain these new-fangled occupations, it was strange to be reproached with limiting the old customs and established usages of the country. To clubs and meetings such as these, and not to the ancient despotism, France had owed all its miseries, as had been so often alleged. The government of France, and all its orders, were yielding and conforming; and till these clubs were instituted, all

all was prosperous and amicable. For these reasons he heartily approved of the Bill, and would give it his decided support. The principle and practice of it were to be traced in the constitution, and, in the present circumstances, facts were to be found that called for its application. The Bill was besides as remediable and as little objectionable as possible. It tended to frustrate the machinations of the active and desperate few, who sought to raise themselves on the ruin of their country; and when the season of calm reflection and confidence came, the bulk of the people, he was persuaded, would regard it, as he did, as a measure timely adopted and wisely devised, to protect them from their enemies, and secure the constitution under which they had so long prospered.

Mr. *Harrison* said, he would not attempt to endeavour disprove the connection between the meetings of the London Corresponding society and the late flagitious violence to his Majesty, lest he should be accounted seditious, and one of the enemies to good order. He abhorred as much as any man the outrage committed on the person of his Majesty, and wished the persons guilty of it to be brought to punishment; he nevertheless could not consent to implicate bodies of men in the atrocious transactions of a few individuals; he hoped and trusted that they were few who were guilty of such an act of extraordinary violence, which he did not consider as a premature act, but a violence dictated by the sudden impulse of the moment on some infatuated persons. The pressure of distresses occasioned by the war, together with the high price of corn and other provisions, had produced ill-temper, and a disposition, among the lower classes throughout the country, which, in a moment of madness, might prompt some of them to make a desperate attempt: the way to prevent the repetition of such crimes, was not, however, in his opinion, by acts of unexampled severity, but by giving them a peace, and putting measures in such a train that their distresses might subside. If the necessity for further laws could be clearly and satisfactorily proved, no man would be more ready than himself to promote them; but, from what he had heard, it had not been shewn that the present laws were defective; on the contrary, the crown lawyers themselves had proved them to be sufficient. If the law of treason did not apply in the ordinary cases alluded to during the discussion of this Bill, the persons who offended might be adequately punished by the law of misdemeanor. Instead of proving that there was any defect in the law, as it now existed, the gentlemen in the executive government, appeared to him to have shewn their neg-

glect, their inattention, and inability, in not preventing the commission and the repetition of the evils they complained of; in fact, wherever they began to institute a remedy, it was evident that they had been guilty of some error before it was brought to effect. Were there any necessity to prevent sedition, he feared the present Bill would have a contrary effect; because it was impossible for the magistrate to have any powerful authority over a large meeting, without the assistance of the military force, which was a remedy at all times dangerous, and only fit to be applied to in cases of extremity. Whenever there had been a necessity to apply to the military of late, to the great credit of the officers and men, he was happy to be able to say, that it had been used with much moderation; but he feared that resistance on the one hand, and pique on the other, might one day produce fatal consequences, and then the soldiers might be affected with a contrition the next day, when it might not be altogether safe for government to depend on the caprice of the military. Let them look to the Pretorian guards, and thence take a view of the Roman empire, to the Janissaries among the Turks, at different periods of history, and the various sudden revolutions which the soldiers have effected in all military countries. Should this Bill once pass, there would be an end of all freedom of debate, an end of enquiry into the conduct of ministers, and an end of every means of obtaining redress of grievances from the executive government. The minister would no longer have to call for that blind confidence which had been so repeatedly demanded of late, and so imprudently given; he would be in the fullest possession of every species of authority to enforce whatever acts he pleased to introduce and get passed. The confidence which had been given to him, had led to the waste of so much blood and treasure; and if we continued the war, and continued to deprive the people of the only blessings they enjoy, we should go on, from extreme to extreme, till, instead of quelling our enemies abroad by famine, we should, by famine and oppression at home, provoke the people to actual rebellion. He therefore protested publickly against the Bill, because he could not bear to see those principles ripped up by the roots on which the government had so long stood and flourished.

Lord Mornington said, that the circumstances which constituted the necessity for the present measure, and the applicability and competency of the measure to the urgency of the case, struck him so forcibly that he was surprised so much difference of opinion had arisen upon it; he would therefore
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endeavour, not without hopes of success, to explain it distinctly to the house.

The whole scope of the case resolved itself in his mind into three distinct heads of consideration. The first was, did there exist an evil of magnitude sufficient to call for some remedy? Next, was there power in the law, as it stood, adequate to the evil? And, thirdly, was the Bill under consideration competent to meet the evil, or did it exceed the degree of power necessary for that purpose? On the second and third of these questions much had already been said; he would therefore confine himself to the first chiefly; and he hoped to make it appear, that there was not to be found, in the whole records of history, any one case that called so loudly for the interference of parliament. Much difference of opinion respecting the meetings lately held had prevailed, and the outrageous assault on that part of the constitution which the house was particularly called on to guard and protect. Upon this gentlemen had spoken, each, according to the impression his mind had received, and each referring to a cause correspondent to that impression. One honourable gentleman had said, that it was an accidental outrage. Let the house consider whether it would be possible to persuade the nation, that the sovereign was insulted, and personally assaulted in his way to Parliament by accident, or, in other words, without cause or motive. Gentlemen had corrected themselves, and said, that it was not owing to accident, but to a plot of the government, in order to propagate an opinion of the disloyalty of the nation.

In contradiction of those two suppositions, some gentlemen had said, (and for that purpose entered into a critical analysis of the King's Speech,) that ministers had endeavoured to prove that the loyalty of the nation was never so high as at present, as if they were determined to contradict their first, second and third assertions. At the same moment they had further declared, that it was owing neither to accident nor to a plot of government, but to the feelings of the people, irritated by an unsuccessful war, and a scarcity of bread. On these different assertions, loose and contradictory as they were, he would say but few words. An honourable gentleman had asked, did it ever before happen, that the sacred person of the sovereign was so outraged? To this he would answer, that if it never did happen before, if the minds and character of the people were so changed and brutalized, was not the house to look for some other cause, and enquire what that dark motive could be, that armed the people against their sovereign? And
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would not that enquiry lead them, by natural and obvious steps, to those societies, whose existence, even the scepticism of the warmest opposers of the Bill could not deny, and whose whole transactions were obviously founded on principles that led directly to the act already commemorated.

His lordship said, he would not refer to former proceedings or the report of the secret committee, nor would he advert to the trials of the supposed conspirators, but would content himself with intreating the house to recollect, what the principles of those societies had been, simply as matters of fact, and what their own opinions respecting them were, at the beginning of the year 1795, when they renewed the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act. Having desired gentlemen to keep these points continually in memory, he would further beg their attention while he took a view of the transactions of the societies since that time; as they came under the observation, not only of himself, but of every one, and were taken from authority not to be doubted; their own writings and publications.

At the conclusion of last session, his lordship said, he had hopes that what had happened in France, the mischiefs which had arisen to the people of that country, from the wild principle that every individual had a right to share in the sovereignty, and that it was a violation of that right to admit of any qualification of property in election; that the dreadful examples of the bad consequences arising to all, even to the lowest orders of the people of that unhappy country, from that principle, and (to use the words of the detestable Robespierre) from the "despotism of liberty," would have had some influence on the minds of people, and prevented the farther progress of the same ruinous principles among them; that it would have occurred to them, how very few of all those who rose from the dregs of society, and rioted in the blood and treasure of the nobility and gentry of France, had come to such an end as to leave them just objects of envy; how many of them followed each other to the scaffold, immediately on the heels of those they murdered; and how many of those who died a violent death suffered in their memory; how many that stood at the highest pinnacle of elevation on one day, were hurried on the next to the guillotine. He had hopes, he said, that these glaring effects of the French revolution would have brought to the minds of those who were engaged in deep adventures here, that, though such men might have a temporary prosperity, that prosperity must necessarily be short, and that their fall would be more rapid than

than their rise. Full fraught with these hopes, he had given his assent to suffering the expiration of the act for suspending the *Habeas Corpus* act; but most grievously was he disappointed in his hopes; for he found that the Parliament was scarcely prorogued, before those societies again recommenced their former practices upon the public mind, with increased activity, and additional vigour; so far from being deterred by the awful and formidable examples which France afforded them in the successive cutting off of her successive usurpers, they flattered themselves that they should rather have the good fortune of those few demagogues who had escaped the guillotine, than the fate of those who had fallen victims to their unjustifiable usurpation, and disproportionate ambition; again held general meetings, and again developed their designs in publications, which stated "that they had suffered a storm; that their vessel was endangered, but now had put to sea with greater prospect of success than ever; that they had the satisfaction to see their principles actively propagating among their countrymen; and that their numbers multiplied at the rate of 150 new members in a week, and sometimes 70 or 80 in a day." It seems as if the whole of the British nation were convened on this extraordinary occasion; for, upon their own declaration, they had renewed their system, and increased the means of propagating their doctrines. They had told the people what they were to expect from inertness, and what from supplication, and exclaimed, "How long, O foolish countrymen, will you call upon Hercules!" The meaning of which was easy to be understood.

His lordship said, that he must again request gentlemen to keep constantly in their view, the principle disclosed by those societies previous to the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* act. That principle was adhered to with additional zeal, and the spirit of enforcing it was so far increased, that the house would find these societies criticising and condemning the constitution of France as an imperfect system; inasmuch as the principle of equality had been abandoned; because, in the formation of that constitution, property had been made a necessary qualification in electors, and the right of unlimited universal suffrage had been abandoned. The better to carry their plans into execution, they affected to adopt a pacific system, declaring, as their resolutions stated, "That they did not mean to demand rights with arms, but by certain measures, in such a nature, that the House of Commons *must* accede to them; and that if any despaired of obtaining a reform, and looked for

for that to riot, they would tell them, that it was not riot that could bring about that revolution which *every one must wish for.*" This pacific system, however, was only to be continued, provided the parliament would voluntarily submit to the absurd and extravagant doctrines of universal suffrage and annual parliaments, which was neither more nor less than a complete surrender of the constitution. The ignorance of the lower classes of the people, who, through prejudice and bad habits, still nursed and cherished a regard for artificial distinctions, which they proposed in time to remove, these new legislators stated to be the prop of the constitution; and this ignorance they proposed to remove, in order that the constitution might fall; and this happy accomplishment, this general illumination, they declare, is only to be effected by cheap publications, circulated in different channels to the people, the expences of which were to be defrayed from the revenue of the society, and any person who chose to take up the trade of a bookseller, and assist in the publication of them, was to be encouraged. His lordship said, he would shew the house what sort of light this illumination threw around them; and in doing so, he would speak of three societies concerned in this negotiation; the London Corresponding Society, the Society of the Friends of Liberty, and the London Reforming Society. He assured them, he would not quote a single word but from books sold by the printers and booksellers of those societies; printers and booksellers not only employed, but recommended by them, and called patriot booksellers; in whose hands, moreover, the petition of the meeting at Copenhagen-house was left for the purpose of receiving signatures. The tenor of the books from which he quoted, was neither more nor less than to excite the poor to seize the lauded property of the kingdom; to stir up the soldiery to mutiny; to degrade and debase the naval and military characters, and stigmatize every naval and military success as a misfortune; to represent the administration of justice as corrupt from its very source, and the judges as venal and influenced by the king and his ministers; to mark the nobility as a degraded race, and to invite the people to strike them from their seats; to represent monarchy as a burthen, and an hereditary monarchy as useless, absurd, and founded on false principles; and to take every opportunity of ridiculing the person of our sovereign with the most immoderate licentiousness; to recommend rigicide, as he would presently undertake to shew, to blaspheme the scriptures, and revile religion, as accessaries to the system which

which they condemn as ruinous, oppressive, and corrupt; and lastly, to decry the established church and constitution, till they had wrought the people to that pitch of frantic rage, that would inevitably end in their pulling down the pillar of the state, and burying the whole fabric in one undistinguishable mass of ruin.

His lordship proceeded to read the publications alluded to in elucidation of the propositions before stated; and first, he read from a pamphlet, "that the landed property of the country was originally got by conquest, or by encroachment on the property of the people; and as those *public robbers*, who had so obtained its possession, had shewn no moderation in the use of it, it would not be fit to neglect the precious opportunity of recovering their rights. A few hearty fellows, with arms, &c. might take possession of the whole; a particular committee be appointed to receive it: all the possessors be called upon to deliver up to that committee their writings and documents, in order to be burned; and the owners be made to disgorge the last payment of their tenants, in order to form a fund for *good citizens*; and if the aristocracy arose in resistance, let the people be firm, and dispatch them, cutting them off root and branch." This, his lordship observed, was published by a bookseller and printer, at whose house the Copenhagen-house petition of the 12th of November lay to be signed.

One passage more his lordship thought it necessary to read, as it contained a *direct incitement to regicide*. It was a definition of a guillotine, "An instrument (as they called it) of rare invention. As it is the custom, (observe, said his lordship, the levity and even ribaldry, mixed with cruelty, and recommendation of crime, that has distinguished all the French revolutionary writings,) as it is the custom to decapitate and not hang kings, it is proper to have this instrument ready, to make death easy to them, supposing a necessity of cutting them off. This instrument is used only for great malefactors, such as kings, bishops, and prime ministers. England and France have had their regular turns in executing their kings; France did it last, &c. &c. and in conclusion, said his lordship, "*Ankerstroem* and *Damiens*, the two regicides, are held up to the reverence of mankind." This, too, is from a printer, given to the public by the societies, in the list of *patriotic printers*.

[Name him, name him, came from all parts of the house.]

Citizen Lee, said his Lordship.

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What,

What, continued his lordship, can the house now suppose is the tendency of this pacific system, this bloodless conquest? sir, would it not be supposed, that, instead of being the production of Englishmen, this foul, most foul treason—[*Hear! hear!* from the opposite side.]

I do not say, continued his lordship, that if brought in the judgment of a court, it would be decided to be treason: but I will maintain, that the heart that uttered it was the heart of as foul a traitor as ever raised the dagger of a parricide. It is not even English treason—No, sir. It is all French treason. Would not one rather suppose that I was reading the bloody page of Marat, or the sanguinary code of Robespierre, than the production of an Englishman. On his own knowledge, his lordship said, he could venture to state, unequivocally, that a production entitled *king-killing*, and another, *the Reign of George the Last*, were sold at Copenhagen-house. Under such impressions as these, did the persons assembled go there to discuss political subjects? There the present scarcity was attributed, not to failure of crops, but to parliamentary corruption. His lordship wished the house to consider what the effect of such topics on minds so prepared must have been. This was not all that had passed. The people were taught that they had no hope left from legislative or executive powers, but that they were to look to themselves alone; since they could hope for no redress from the constituted authorities. His lordship described the outrage on his Majesty at the time he was passing to his parliament in colours calculated to make a forcible impression on the mind; a sight, which, at another time, had been finely described by his Right Honourable Friend, (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) as peculiarly gratifying, because it was the surest pledge of the order and harmony of the state.

One circumstance more remained to be mentioned, which was, that when all the nation was in consternation and horror at this event, a printer had the audacity to publish a libel, in which the whole of the circumstances were misrepresented, to excite the ridicule and contempt of the people. He left it to the consideration of the house to determine from these indisputable and peaceable facts whether there was not a plain, obvious, and clear connexion between the societies and that outrage. It had been said, that this was a libel upon Englishmen, who have been educated in rational freedom, and could never be so lost to the sense of their interest as to violate the blessings they enjoy. Would the Honourable Gentleman, who asserted this, deny that other free nations have suffered

suffered by the dissemination of these doctrines, that America, and more particularly Geneva, were not injured by them? Be it remembered that revolutions are frequent with republican governments; in Geneva, it was true, that such evils were less likely in consequence of their habits of order and religion. The only revolution which had been marked with blood there, and where the priests were murdered, was the late one. A celebrated author (d'Ivernois) speaking upon this subject, had well expressed himself, that the Genevese did but touch the poison, and their hearts were corrupted. The smallness of the numbers who entertained these opinions was also an objection; but let the Honourable Gentleman recollect, that the number of those were small who accomplished the French revolution, who brought about the massacres of the 10th of August and 2d of September; and they were small too in their numbers who caused the commotions in Geneva. Would you, he asked, because the constitutions of the people in England are strong, feed them with poison? His lordship declined entering on the discussion of the remaining points; he had however felt himself bound, by his duty to the house and to the public, to state thus much; and he left it to others, who were blessed with better health and more vigour, to deal with the other parts of the subject.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, it had not been his intention to take part in the debate; he had proposed to leave it to gentlemen who were better prepared, and who might not yet have had an opportunity of delivering their opinions. Some things, however, had fallen from the noble lord, upon which it was impossible for him to remain silent; although he could neither pretend to the talents or the ability of the noble lord to answer him as he could wish; nor had he the advantage of so much deliberation, and of so much preparation too, as was manifest by the arrangement of the noble lord's speech. He was happy, however, to find, that inferior as he was to the noble lord, one of his predictions had been fulfilled. When he made his motion for a Committee of Enquiry, he foretold that if the Right Honourable Gentleman opposite would not suffer him to obtain that Committee of Enquiry, gentlemen would start up with lines and scraps of pamphlets, with paragraphs and hand-bills, in battle array against him; and he expected that they would bring up the rear with prints and cuts still more alarming and formidable. He paid no credit, however, to their assertions, and was resolved to give none; and if he were to single out any person from the crowd, without the insinuation of a personal affront, he should declare

that the noble lord was the least entitled to his credit : exactly that time two years ago, that, with the same unequal talents, and with the same unequal preparations also, he had in some degree refuted the assertions of that noble lord. Exactly two years ago, at the opening of the session of parliament, he remembered to have seen the noble lord with the same sonorous voice, the same placid countenance, in the same attitude, leaning gracefully upon the table, and giving an account from shreds and patches of Brissot, that the French Republic would last but a few months longer. Unfortunately for the credit of the noble lord, not one word of all his predictions had come to pass. On the contrary, France had continued the war, long after the noble lords's predictions had foretold its period, with astonishing success, and had experienced considerable prosperity. Twice had the noble lord prophesied in vain. What reliance then, could be placed upon the assurances of a person whose former assertions, the event had in every instance falsified, and whose prophecies had, in every instance, proved false? How, in common sense, should he treat them, but with derision and contempt? He believed the noble lord was as much in the right in predicting that a revolution would follow, from the proceedings of certain societies, as he had been in his former predictions, of the rapidly approaching ruin and destruction of the French Republic. The arguments the noble lord had made use of, to prove the connection between the proceedings of the London Corresponding Society, and the *accidental* outrage that had been offered to the person of the sovereign, neither dazzled his sight nor satisfied his understanding. In fact, he did not believe there was any more connection between the two, than he could admit there was any connection between the noble lord's speech and the question in debate.

The more closely to follow the noble lord through the whole of his elaborate composition, he would begin with his first argument, that such an insult as that offered to his Majesty, on the first day of the present session of Parliament, had never been before attempted. He most sincerely wished the fact were otherwise ; but, unfortunately there had been, to the disgrace of the loyalty of the people, he believed many instances of similar misconduct, among which, he mentioned one that took place at the Middlesex election. Assuming this as an historical fact, which was not true, the noble lord had endeavoured to establish the proofs of his connection ; and, after examining a variety of causes, none of which could in his mind at all apply ; he said, he looked about for another cause,
and

and found one novel and extraordinary, namely, the Societies. Surely the noble Lord had forgotten, that long before his Majesty's proceſſion to Parliament, and long before the meeting at Copenhagen-house, there were tumults and disorders in various parts of the kingdom, which he believed the noble lord, with all his ingenuity, could not be able to fasten on the societies. Other riots, other tumults, other insurrections, had been frequent in almost every county throughout England; and his Majesty's troops had often been called upon, to shed the blood of his Majesty's subjects, who had been guilty of riot and disturbance, on account of the distress and famine arising from the war. In those transactions clearly there could be no connection; indeed it had not once been argued nor insinuated, that any of those distressed people who committed outrages, to appease the clamour of their starving families, were incited to it by the London Corresponding Society, or were any way connected with it. He should therefore differ from the noble Lord upon that point, and attribute the outrage to no other cause than the pressure of extreme distress. Mr. Sheridan said, he respected his Majesty as much as the noble Lord, and entertained as high an esteem for his many amiable virtues: but, in proportion as he respected his Majesty, he respected the law also; the king was not above the law, and consequently he could not consent to so violent a measure as the present Bill. Might not men, returning home to their starving families, which they were not able to support, from the extreme irritation of the moment, and the delusion of confounding the acts of the minister with the authority of the monarch, be guilty of outrages which they would repent of in their cooler moments? This was no extravagant argument. It had been the cause which produced one distress, and was capable of producing another.

The noble lord had indignantly spoken of theoretical discourses and debates upon government, and had bitterly inveighed against political topics in societies, and against speeches on speculative points in politics. He had dwelt particularly upon the circumstance of some persons alluring their auditors with a shew of entertainment, and making them pay for it six-pence a-piece. In fact, the speech of the noble Lord himself had been entirely a theoretical lecture on politics, and a specimen of the very sort of discourse which he had reprobated. For his own part, he had not experienced much entertainment from it, and he certainly would not have given six-pence to hear it. One mode of argument that had been used that night, which he could not assent to; the noble lord had represented

represented the lower classes of the people of all countries to be alike. This was a gross misrepresentation. Nothing could be more false and absurd, than to suppose, that a people, bred up in a free country, and living in the habits of enjoying and considering their rights; that a people like the people of England, would ever conduct themselves like slaves just rescued from a vile, grinding, and infamous despotism. The noble lord had mentioned the republic of Geneva; would he compare the people of that miserable state, always subject to the domination of Savoy or France, from whom it received such a constitution as those countries thought proper to dictate—would he compare that people with the inhabitants of the great, the proud, and the powerful British nation? He had read the account of the late revolution in Geneva, alluded to by the noble Lord; and he was personally acquainted with its author, Mr. d'Ivernois, whose name he mentioned with respect. It was possible, however, that that gentleman might be a little biased in his history; for he, at this time received a pension from his Majesty's ministers.

The noble lord had also made a comparison with America; what was there in America, except a safe, wise, and prosperous people, and an admirable president? What had been the effect? Had not the American States avoided a quarrel with this country, and made an advantageous treaty with us? Had they not preserved their constitution and their liberties? Did not their commerce flourish? Were they not safe, happy, free, and prosperous? By what mode of argument then would the noble lord make use of the insinuation of the American States, to prove the danger to which we were liable in this country, from the publication and dissemination of these new principles? They who accused the English people of treason and rebellion, who charged them with being prone to commit outrages and excesses, were not judges of the sort of stuff and material of which the human heart was made; and particularly an Englishman's, when they hazarded such assertions. The reason of their ignorance was plain; because, from their own natural pride, they had always kept aloof from the people, and were now obliged to do so in consequence of the calamitous war they had engaged in, and the disastrous consequences it had produced. Hence, because six or seven people, as ignorant of human nature and the hearts of Englishmen, as the minister had stupidly imagined, that they could do this, and that, and t'other, and electrify the whole nation by a few violent pamphlets, they were taught to believe, that a great body
of

of people is in a state of actual rebellion. It was impossible to presume to doubt the ignorance of those men, when they acted in the same parallel with men in high situations.

The house could not, ought not, to give credit to such a mass of matter as had that night been brought before them. The noble lord had affirmed that it was foul treason which had been published by citizen Lee. If it was foul treason, why did not the Attorney General prosecute citizen Lee? and what stronger power did he require for that purpose, than what the law had already armed him with? The noble lord had voted for the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* act, now he wished this Bill to pass, and yet no person whatever had been prosecuted. The noble Lord was indignant also, because his honourable and learned friend had expressed his disapprobation at the unfair attempt to divide the rich, and set them in array against the poor; and yet this division will, and must, be the necessary consequence of the measures which the ministers are pursuing. They who hold out the mass of the poor to be capable of such enormities as the French have perpetrated, do, in fact, set the rich against them; and the consequence must be, that the poor will be stung and goaded on to acts of resentment. The noble lord had read a pamphlet, or an extract from a pamphlet, laying down a scheme for an attack upon property; when such alarms were given, every man knew that additional provisions would be enacted, and additional penal laws be made, against such depredations. He would re-assert that those who argued in that manner, libelled the people. The noble lord had read, and read again, his scraps and paragraphs, whilst his honourable friends cheered him at every period; but how did they cheer him? While he was detailing the particulars of this foul and horrible treason, they cheered him with laughter; and, instead of expressing their regret at the dangers with which they were threatened, they did not even hear of them with gravity. If they did not consent to go into the proofs of this treason before a committee of Enquiry, he was warranted in pronouncing that they had no right whatever to assent to or support the Bill. If they were content with bare assertion, he would assert also and deny that citizen Lee was printer to the societies; and he challenged them to the proof of the contrary. He might put his signature to the pamphlets which he chose to publish; but was that proof? Good God! he supposed they would exclaim, Who can doubt a printer's veracity? As to the doctrine of *king-killing*, he knew the majority of the people held it in universal detestation; but if a

fool,

fool, a madman, or a traitor, as ignorant as the ministers, believed such sentiments were popular, was it to be deemed a sufficient proof of their existence?

It was not difficult, Mr. Sheridan said, to see the views with which these pretended plots against the life of his Majesty were brought forward. Ministers wished to seize upon the loyal mind of the English nation, and raise groundless alarms. He had twice in that house mentioned the bow and arrow, or pop-gun plot, as it was termed. Ministers, he maintained, had kept in prison the persons accused of it, whom they knew to be innocent. They had offered to liberate them upon giving bail. If these persons were innocent, why were they suffered to lie in prison? If they were guilty, or if there was any reasonable cause of suspecting them to be guilty, of the foul and wicked crime with which they were charged, why had the officers of justice liberated them on bail? Was it possible that the house could be satisfied with the miserable proofs adduced by the noble lord? The noble lord had been looking for plots with the utmost diligence and industry, but he could find none. Would the house decide the most important subject ever offered to their consideration, upon file scraps, and paltry passages from pamphlets, collected by rummaging old book shops, and turning up the dirt of every stall in London? Good God! in what place was it that he spoke? To whom did he address himself? How would the members of that house face their constituents, after sacrificing every thing held valuable by their ancestors, if they should agree to make that sacrifice without all the information, and all the proofs, which the nature of the case would admit? What might convince them, might not have the same effect upon others. They should consider that they were all of them the servants of the people of England. They voted and acted in that house not in their individual capacity, but as agents and attorneys for others; and they would not perform their duty, if they could not satisfy the reasonable enquiries of their constituents.

This measure he was satisfied would create that disaffection, and encourage those plots, the supposed existence of which was made the pretext for its adoption. He deprecated nothing more than a revolution; but he believed it was not impossible that the people might be driven to some violent remedy, rendered by circumstances plausible, if not necessary. He apprehended little from the temper and discontent of the people, except this Bill provoked their anger and their indignation. It might create discontents, and render a remedy desperate as theirs

theirs would be whenever they were driven to it, both plausible and necessary. The conduct of the societies, he considered himself bound to defend, because the societies were the objects of general obloquy and clamour: and as to the industrious and working part of the community, he reminded the house that they had never been unfaithful. An honourable and learned gentleman near him, (the Attorney-general), with tears in his eyes, had expressed his desire that his son should enjoy those honours and emoluments which he had obtained solely by his industry; to which Mr. Sheridan said, he must add, by his great talents also, and an unblemished character. Let that Hon. Gentleman look to the situation of a man, who, with the scanty income of 9s. a week, at the rate bread is at returns home to a wife and family of four or five children, in a miserable lodging, and judge of his feelings. Ministers are secure in their pensions and places, and are therefore insensible of these hardships. Be it remembered, however, that the British nation is a grateful nation; and let gentlemen possessed of estates, to the merchants and manufacturers, who heard him, recollect whether they had ever seen a poor labouring man unthankful in his return for their bounty. It was not in the nature or the heart of Englishmen. If government were bounteous, they would not find the people dissatisfied. He regretted the bad situation to which the country might be reduced by it, but he rejoiced that he had done every thing in his power to prevent it.

Mr. *Secretary Dundas* said, he rose not from an idea that his abilities would give additional weight to the arguments that had been adduced in favour of the Bill; but his situation in the country, was such as to convince him that he ought not to shrink at a moment when he heard dangerous and unconstitutional doctrines groundlessly attributed to administration. So far from feeling that the rights, liberties, and happiness of the people of this country would be invaded by the present Bill, he felt and was convinced, that the rights, liberty, and happiness of the people, could not be effectually preserved to them, if some such measure as the present were not immediately adopted. In his opinion if some measure were not adopted, the house would criminally neglect the safety of the constitution; they would neither perform their duty, nor answer the expectations of the country. Impressed with this feeling, he was unwilling to give a silent vote. Before he came to the principal question, however, he would discuss one or two preliminary points. He reprobated the idea of an Honourable Gentleman, who had in a strange manner, charged

the higher orders of the people with intending to separate their interests from those of the lower class; such an accusation, he hesitated not to declare, a gross calumny. If ever there was a country in which these classes were united; where, from the humblest cottager to the monarch on the throne, all the intermediate ranks of society were cemented and connected by one continued chain, each giving assistance to the others, it was the country in which we live. To assert that a separation between the rich and the poor had taken place, or ever would take place, was, he repeated it, a gross calumny. The union of these orders appeared from the connection between master and servant, landlord and tenant, and above all from the innumerable charities that were every where established, from the parochial rates, and from various other benevolent institutions, which would prove to the people that they were under the peculiar care of those whom providence in its goodness had placed over them, nor did the statute book contain an exception to this rule of general benevolence. This very calumny against the higher orders of society, formed a part of that dangerous system against which they were called upon to protect the country. The Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Sheridan) had stated several facts to the house: he would not dispute the powers of eloquence with which that Honourable Gentleman had dressed them; but he would assert that they were the Honourable Gentleman's own creation, and had no existence but in his imagination. He did not mean to say that the war had not occasioned some calamities. But he begged leave to say distinctly, that whatever were the calamities of the war, and all wars were naturally productive of calamities, and whatever were the evils resulting from the scarcity, which he admitted God had been pleased to visit the country with the last year, they could not be accounted the causes of the general scarcity, nor could it be proved that they had given rise to the opinions he so much reprobated as malicious and baneful.

What was the state of the country in the years 1791 and 1792? Where then was either war or scarcity? The nation was in the most happy and flourishing condition, inasmuch, that at that time they were taking off the taxes that had been laid upon the people. Yet was it not equally true, that then, as at present, these principles had broken out, and manifested their operation in a progressive course of sedition? It was therefore, that these were but pretexts, tending to excite and agitate the humbler classes of the community. The wants of the lower orders had received the best alleviations

tions from the attention of the wealthy in their own districts ; and though it was not so much his habit to talk of them as it was of other gentlemen, yet he could feel the sufferings of the poor, and admit their claims as extensively as any man. Among other arguments urged against the Bill, it had been contended that it was contrary to the Bill of Rights, and that the Bill of Rights was invaded by it. He denied that there was any thing in that memorable and sacred declaration of our liberties, more than in any act of parliament, which in any way barred them from taking the present measures ; nothing that prevented them from revising, altering, or suspending its provisions, as the weighty exigencies of the times might demand. Perhaps there was something in the Riot Act that was not strictly reconcileable with the Bill : the *Habeas Corpus* too, in its suspension, stood upon a similar footing with the present measure. By the Bill of Rights they were allowed to wear defensive arms : there was no doubt of it ; a man might do so ; and yet the government had since, by the authority of salutary and well-timed statutes, disarmed whole districts in the northern part of the kingdom ; and he never could allow himself to forget that the restriction of this privilege had been extended throughout whole counties. Venerating, as he did, almost to idolatry, those ancestors to whom we were indebted for the Bill of Rights, supremely valuable as that recognition of the rights of the people was, it was obtained by the demand of the houses of parliament, and it had been obtained by the parliament only. He saw now, however, principles of action far different from those which governed the illustrious leaders of that glorious revolution, actuating and impelling those gentlemen who continually profess their admiration of that event. The great patriots of that day were accustomed to look for the safeguard of their liberties, their property, and their religion, only from the energy and wisdom of parliament ; whereas the modern doctrine was that every good was to be expected from popular assemblies. It was objected to the Bill, that it prevented the right of petitioning ; so far from preventing the right of petitioning, it in fact secured it by directing it to its proper channel. Whatever good had been done by petitioning, he would venture to assert, had been entirely done by petitions under the protection of established laws, and not by tumultuous meetings : such meetings might produce anarchy, but they could never be advantageous to the constitution. If gentlemen would reflect on the cases in which petitions had tended to secure the liberty of the people, they would find that they had not originated from popular conventions irregularly held, but from

legal assemblies called together by constituted authorities. The petitions presented on the Excise Bill and the India Bill were sufficient proofs of this. He deprecated the idea of insinuating suspicions of improper conduct in magistrates, and said it tended materially to weaken the necessary authority of men in public situations. With regard to popular meetings, the Right Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Fox) had, he said, stood forward more frequently than any other political character in appeals to the people. He had displayed the most extraordinary willingness to resort to them; so that it frequently happened, that he was without the door of the house, attacking ministers with invective and asperity one half of the day, where they had no means of defending themselves, and during the other half combating them within those walls with the most determined inveteracy. In 1774, in order to excite the indignation of the public against ministers, for their prosecution of the American war, the Right Honourable Gentleman had displayed his oratorical talents on a stage erected for that purpose in Westminster-hall, with as little effect, however, as to the avowed purport of his design at that time, as there was ground to apprehend would be the case with respect to his exertions on a late occasion. Yet it had happened, that he was induced, no doubt, from conscientious motives, to acknowledge the virtues, and connect himself with the political conduct of those whom he had reprobated for so many years with every possible bitterness and severity.

Immediately after he had withdrawn himself from the administration of the Earl of Shelburne, the Right honourable gentleman had again appealed to his favourite popular meeting, at which, no doubt, many individuals were vehemently assailed, who had no means of defending themselves; a line of combat neither candid nor fair. Let the House recollect the associations in the year 1780; associations, which, though commenced without any settled design, proved fatal in their consequences. Had the Bill before the House existed at that time, would the lives, liberty, and property of Englishmen have been so dreadfully violated, as they were in consequence of the meeting held in St. George's Fields? An unfortunate, but deluded, noblemen* had the audacity to say, that, unless the House of Commons acceded to the object of their petition, he would require their assent at the head of 165,000 men. Since then they had experienced such a lamentable increase of the dangers resulting from popular meetings;

* Lord George Gordon.

since they had seen the evils which threatened the constitution from such combination, would they hesitate to pass a Bill which could, in no view, be said to take away the right of the subject, and which only directed it to a proper object. They ought to take care how they played with the prejudices of a mob: they were not safe weapons to sport with. Nothing could be more improper or more dangerous in a legislature, than to hold up the doctrine of resistance to the people. That it was a rule to be laid down, was by no means true, as resistance never could form a part of government. It must arise from the dissolution of government; nor could he avoid noticing the criminal indecency of imputing arbitrary motives to one part of the government, calling upon the legislature, which was one branch of government, to listen to imputations upon another. Whatever might be the conduct of the Right honourable gentleman in the years 1782 and 1783, he well recollected, that from 1770 to 1774, he had not resorted to any means that the wisdom of parliament did not suggest, though when he said this, he was aware that their might be circumstances suited to particular periods of a man's life, and maturer age might not chuse to adopt the conduct of youth. The Right honourable gentleman, from his earliest knowledge of him, had been a friend to the system of popular meetings; but he doubted much whether he had imbibed any good principle from that system, or established any good principle by it. A large assembly had been convened the other day, at which that Right honourable gentleman presided, and he had no doubt he had exerted himself with great activity and uncommon powers of voice; but could the 30,000 people, who were reported to be present, have been all benefited by his greatest exertion of his faculties. He had certainly been much applauded; had not those, however, who were with him on the scaffold shared in that applause? He declared he had always admired the Right honourable gentleman's talents, but he seriously thought they might be displayed more usefully than on such occasions. That house he considered as a more proper stage on which that Right honourable gentleman might display his abilities. "I know (said Mr. Dundas) he is able to battle us all." The Right honourable gentleman would act in a more manly manner, if he had any charge to make against persons in administration, to do it openly in the House, and not to arraign the conduct of men, who, from being absent, were unable to defend themselves. If the majority of the 30,000, who attended the meeting where the Right honourable gentleman presided, had remained at home in

in the exercise of honest industry, for the maintenance of their wives and children, it would, he was convinced, have been better for society. The food dealt out to them from the rostrum was not the most wholesome; and, it was to be remembered, that such as it was, the wives of the men present had not their share of it.

* If any good could come of these self-constituted meetings, it would be by placing them under the eye of the legislature. Indeed he had flattered himself, that after the trials of Hardy and others, the good sense of the nation would have checked their further progress. But the meetings in St. George's Fields and Copenhagen House had dissipated these hopes. Meetings of this kind would now therefore be placed under the direction of a magistrate acting at his peril.

To the assertion of Mr. Sheridan, that ministers had denied proof, he replied, that public notoriety was the best ground of proof; and the whole country had declared that some strong and efficacious remedy was necessary. He put it to the wisdom of the House, whether, under all the existing circumstances, it was right that any individual should have the power of assembling people for any business he thought proper. Between trusting to the discretion of individuals on the one hand, and the discretion of the magistrate on the other, he could not see the smallest room to gettare.

Mr. Fox said, if he had much of that vanity, with respect to a consciousness of his talents and abilities which the Right honourable gentleman had been pleased to impute to him, it would have been no small gratification to such feelings to have formed the subject of not merely one, or two or three, but at least four different speeches, which he recollected the Right honourable gentleman (Mr. Dundas) considerable in abilities himself, high in situation, and great in power, to have made upon his character and public conduct. On several occasions, he remembered to have been publicly addressed from the same quarter, in a similar stile of catechism, upon his opinion respecting the extent and mode of reform in parliament, and respecting his sentiments upon the influence of the crown and the proper limits of the royal prerogative. The Right Hon. Secretary had at that time received several hints from his Right Hon. Friend near him (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) not to push his enquiries too far. On the present occasion, however, he was not fortunate enough to reap the fruit of such a kind a hint, and therefore he would answer the present questions in the catechism as well as he was able, with all the plainness and sincerity in his power. The Right

Right Hon. Gentleman had thought proper to allude to an event in Parliament that was antecedent to his (Mr. Dundas) being a member of that house; he meant the Middlesex election; the part that he had taken on that occasion arose upon a question of law, which was submitted to the house for its opinion, and he gave his opinion upon the subject as a member of that house; but the Right Hon. Gentleman was deceived if he thought that he had ever said one word on the point contrary to the general rights of the people to meet and discuss every thing that related to their liberties, or was connected with their interests.

From the Middlesex election, the Right Hon. Gentleman had proceeded to catechise him on the subject of the American war, and by talking of his erecting a stage without doors, he seemed to speak with some contempt of the manner in which he (Mr. Fox) had acted at certain meetings, that were held at Westminster-hall and other places, upon these occasions: he found himself accused with having pronounced invectives against persons who were then in high authority. The Right Hon. Gentleman had forgotten the conduct which his Right Hon. friend (Mr. Pitt) had adopted, and those eloquent speeches he had at that time delivered, in which public harangues to the people were described as the most agreeable and most useful duty which representatives in parliament could discharge to their constituents. In answer to the charge, that he had, in a personal manner, attacked those who had no opportunity of appearing in their own defence, he had to say, that it was the duty of every man, and particularly of every member of parliament, when the conduct of the executive government was called in question, to represent the characters and conduct of members in their true colours. What was the use or the value of a popular meeting, upon a political subject, without that freedom? At meetings held in Yorkshire and other places at that time, such had been the practice of others. Although he had then spoken freely of government, when he opposed its measures, he was willing to allow others to oppose him. In the year 1784, for instance, the house would recollect what had happened. Mr. Burke, in his emphatical language, had called the parliamentary conduct of some gentlemen the revolution of 1784. In that year, the house could not have forgotten how he had been opposed; what invectives had been employed against him, and those in places, where, as the Right Hon. Gentleman had said, he could not be present to answer. Did he ever make one unmanly murmur upon that occasion? Did he ever complain of

of that invective? Did he ever say one word against the sacred rights of the people to assemble and freely discuss political subjects when those discussions were against him? Who would say he ever did? Never in any one instance had he uttered a syllable that went to question the right, or to blame the practice, of holding public meetings of the people. He had endeavoured to answer much of the reasoning that had been urged against him at these meetings; but he had not said a word against the propriety of holding them. What was the principle of the present Bill? to restrain the exercise of free discussion at all those meetings.

The Right Hon. Gentleman had asked, what advantages had resulted to the country from those political meetings during the American war? He did not mean to arrogate to himself any extraordinary share in the opposition which he made to that war? It did not become him to say much upon that subject; he trusted he might, however, be pardoned, if he said that the popular meetings in question, tended to hasten the conclusion of the war. Was the Right Hon. Gentleman of that opinion, or was he not? What did he think of the meetings that were held at Norwich and at other places? Upon this too, the Right Hon. Gentleman might have some information from one of his present friends*, if he wanted any information. Those measures went further than to put an end to the war; they contributed to the correction of some of the abuses of administration, since the celebrated Bill of Mr. Burke, which did that gentleman so much honour, was founded on those measures. Perhaps he should be told, that all the meetings that had any effect (indeed, he had been told so already,) were called by the sheriff; and that all that was said at the meeting at Westminster had no effect, because it was not a meeting which had that authority. He wished to know what magic there was in a meeting that was called by the sheriff, in preference to any other public meeting? So much of the subject therefore, as related to public meetings, he recollected with pleasure and satisfaction. Public meetings had contributed to put an end to the American war: and if he had said some things against any of those individuals who advised it, he was consoled with the reflection that if he had helped to shorten that destructive war only one year, he had contributed to prevent the increase of the number of helpless orphans and mourning widows. He had contributed to lessen the distress of the poor and friendless. Let him not be told,

* Mr. Windham, the Secretary at war.

then,

then, that he had acted an unmanly part, by frequenting those public meetings. He must again say, that if there was any glory in putting an end to the American war, he should be proud to hear that he had, in common with others, a share in that glory. When the Right Hon. Gentleman talked of invectives thrown out at those public meetings, against persons who were not present, he would recommend to him to reflect on what had happened the day before at the meeting at Palace-yard. He knew, and if necessary, he could prove, that there had been manifested a good deal of zeal; in fact, an active canvass had taken place on the part of ministers, in order that their friends might attend that meeting. Messages were sent about, stating that it would be agreeable to government if their friends took care to be present. The consequence was, an attendance was procured, and many friends to government, persons of authority, were there, among whom was his noble colleague Lord Hood, and two honourable gentlemen in his eye (Messrs. Canning and Parkinson); he hoped, therefore, the Right Hon. Gentleman would not complain that any attacks had been made on ministers in the absence of their friends that day.

The Right Hon. Gentleman had also accused him of having altered his course for some years with regard to public meetings; that he had been fond of attending them in the earlier part of his parliamentary life, but that he had of late declined them; he admitted the observation to be founded in truth; the reason was, that for some time past he did not see that his attendance at public meetings could be of any use to the public: whenever he thought it might become so, he was ready to attend; and this he thought a part of his public duty, whatever opinions other persons might entertain upon that subject. If ever such attendance had been necessary, it was so at this time: when the constitution was attacked, it was the duty of every man to exert himself in its defence: he should therefore give all the authority he could pretend to, to such meetings, for the purpose of supporting the rights and liberties of the people. Avowing that for his motive, he was ready to meet any ministerial censure that might be cast upon him. The Right Hon. Gentleman had asked him, if he thought that any efforts of his could be heard with attention? and whether he imagined he could make any impression on such a multitude as thirty thousand? He had no such idea; he had nevertheless used all his endeavours to explain to them the nature of the subject which they had to consider. The Right Hon. Gentleman had also asked whether he thought they

applauded him? His answer was, that he was not so vain as to expect it; he attended not for the purpose of receiving applause, or commanding assent; he went for the purpose of learning the sense of his constituents on the most important political topic which could be presented for their deliberation. It was, he confessed, somewhat unpleasant, particularly at his time of life, to attend popular meetings; the labour and fatigue, however, he considered as the merest trifles, when compared with the fate of the question which had been submitted to the inhabitants of Westminster, whose applause at the meeting arose from the feeling which those present had of the propriety of the measure they were met to adopt. This arose out of the detestation they felt for the Bill before the house. In that view he saw the utility of such meetings, and it was on that ground that he attended them. At that meeting the Bill met what it ought to meet, and what, if the public had any regard for their liberties, it would meet all over the kingdom, general execration and abhorrence. Execration that would be increased in consequence of certain opinions that had been lately delivered in that house. The more the public had that feeling (which, thank God, he exclaimed, they began to manifest), the more he thought it his duty to give such meetings his countenance; meetings on which, perhaps, depended at this moment, the very essence of our constitution. That was his firm and sincere opinion; and that he believed to be the opinion of the public; for very plain and very decided language must at this moment be spoken to save the country from ruin.

The Right Hon. Gentleman had been pleased to pay him compliments on his talents, and had intimated a wish that they should never be exercised any where but in that house: To this he would answer, that he attended that house not for pleasure, but for duty; and he trusted that his attendance there might be more or less useful to the public; of how much use it was, it did not become him to determine. The Right Hon. Gentleman then asked, if he expected to convince that great multitude by his eloquence? Most certainly he did not; as little did he expect to convince that house. It had been said, that the majority of that multitude came pre-determined; perhaps they did. Did the majority of that house come wholly undetermined? Was there no resemblance between the house and that meeting in that respect? He had some experience of the house; and whenever he wholly despaired of persuading the majority of the house on points where the constitution was at stake, he thought attending such meetings

ings as those alluded to useful, because it tended to enable him to arrive at the opinion of the public. Let this be stated to the house; and if this had no effect upon it, his attendance there would be useless, and even burthensome.

It was rather a curious matter of observation, that the debates on the Bill had afforded the first occasion, since the accession of the house of Brunswick to the throne, of an open and parliamentary espousal of the cause of the house of Stuart. The preceding night it had been said by an honourable baronet (Sir Francis Basset) that the idea had been borrowed that evening by the Solicitor General, that though there had been a revolution in the reigns of George the First and Second, it would not have been accompanied with the same dangers which would flow from a similar event taking place at the present crisis; as in the former case, the descendants of the house of Stuart might have been reinstated on the throne; whereas, at the present moment, anarchy, and a general dissolution of all the principles of civilized society, would follow any dispute about the constitutional rights of the sovereign. This was Jacobitism in perfection, and he was not at all surprised at hearing Jacobites come forward with such reasonings. What would the house of Stuart have done, had they been established on the throne? They would have introduced the catholic religion instead of the Protestant. They would, perhaps, have put an end to parliament, resumed the rights of juries, and subverted the liberty of the press. They would not, it was said, have invaded the rights of property, nor invented the detestable name of French Equality, the inroads of which our British heroes swear by their lives and fortunes to resist. If, in the choice of dangers, a man must forfeit his life and property, in order to avoid a greater evil, (for the blessings of the constitution were out of the question, under the government of the Stuarts, which at present was supposed to be the alternative,) whatever might be the theoretical destruction, there was very little practical difference between the alternatives.

Mr. Fox proceeded to notice what had been said with regard to oppression. That it would and ought to produce resistance, had been admitted; and yet gentlemen would not allow any thing to be copied from France. He should be glad to know wherein consisted the right of resistance, and that of the memorable expression of La Fayette, that in certain cases, insurrection became a holy right. The Right Hon. Gentleman had said, resistance could never make any part of a legislative consideration. Who had said that it could? To

what part of the country that doctrine was applied, he was perfectly at a loss to know. Before he quitted this part of the subject he must make some observations on what the Right Hon. Gentleman had said on the Bill of Rights, and the great reverence which had been expressed for the Whigs of that day. He had said that the Bill of Rights had been altered by Parliament. He said the same thing. He believed that a law which the legislature could never touch, must be a bad one; circumstances must govern the legislature as they govern every thing: but the Bill of Rights was a grave and solemn act, and not to be touched but upon grave and solemn occasions, and that upon the most mature deliberation. The Right Hon. Gentleman had said, that the political system of that age was, that parliament was the only security to the people for their preservation, and that out of parliament, were no rights maintained. The fact was otherwise. He had the sanction of the most celebrated man in the reign of King William, when this principle was fully discussed, in favour of his assertion. The marquis of Hartington moved a resolution, "That it is the right of the subject to petition the king for the redress of grievances, or for calling parliament, or dissolving it." This plainly proved, that the rights of the people were, at that time, defended out of parliament as well as in it. The attachment of the marquis of Hartington to the principles of our constitution could not be doubted; this was, therefore, a proper reference; indeed, the whole of the house of Cavendish had uniformly proved an attachment to the principles of freedom. He was sorry, that not a branch of that illustrious family attended to oppose the Bill; he was glad, however, that not one of them supported it.

Another part of this subject to which he must advert, was a very important one. By the Bill, as it stood, an exception was made in favour of corporations and corporate bodies, and this was urged as an argument in favour of the Bill; he conceived the distinction to be a bad one. Who did not know that property would have weight every where? That property should have exclusive right any where, upon thought or upon speech, was the very essence of injustice. It was an idea that tended to the dissolution of all society. In another place, report declared that a person of high authority, considerable talents, and great learning (the Bishop of Rochester) had said, that the mass of the people had nothing to do with laws, but to obey them. This was not very consistent with the religion which that great character professed. He trusted that the people of England would not tamely sur-

surrender their indisputable and hereditary right, whatever inclination an arbitrary minister, or a supercilious prelate, might betray, to wrest their possession out of their hands. What a gross and absurd species of reasoning was it to contend that, because a man has not the good fortune to have a freehold qualification of forty shillings valued rent, he must not be allowed to speak his sentiments on subjects which involved his dearest and most important concern, equally with those of the most affluent.

He did not intend to argue the question of parliamentary reform, or what sort of a reform there ought to be in that house; on that occasion, the idea that the House of Commons was a virtual representation of all the people of England, was, however, to be done away by the distinction in favour of boroughs; the result of that distinction, if it was obtained, would be, that those who had property in boroughs were to be free, and those who had not were not to be permitted to meet for the purpose of petitioning. This distinction tended to make the aristocracy of that house still stronger, and to do away the idea of there being any connection between the house and the mass of the people. It tended to increase the monopoly in boroughs; and to tell the people, that the democratic part of the constitution was not worth preserving. The natural consequence must be, that the interest of boroughs would increase, and those of the rest of the public would diminish. The Bill, therefore, went to institute a fatal distinction between the constituents and non-constituents in the kingdom; a distinction sufficient to destroy the harmony and peace of the country; to confute the only argument which could be adduced in opposition to parliamentary reform, and to convert the government of the country into an aristocracy, or an oligarchy.

Another clause was almost too ridiculous to mention, namely, that which prohibited all public lectures delivered for money. What would become of the professors of the different sciences in the universities? Would they not be clearly involved in the operation of that clause? Even in its most qualified construction, he could not conceive by what principle of policy a man was to be prohibited from acquiring his subsistence by instructing the people in the principles of the constitution? He professed he knew nothing of Mr. Thelwall, and his lectures; if, however, they were innocent, why should he be disturbed? If they were seditious or treasonable, why was he not prosecuted under the existing statutes? The same observations applied to the papers which
had

had been read by the noble lord (Mornington) ; if they were treasonable, the authors of them were amenable to the treason laws. He would not be understood as, in the smallest degree, giving an opinion whether they were or not, nor even whether every seditious paper which was circulated ought to be submitted to the course of law. He rather thought that a judicious selection of the most glaring and dangerous ought to be made by the Attorney-general.

The general principle of the Bill was, he said, a blow at the outworks of the constitution, neither more nor less than a daring attempt to subvert its very foundation and freedom of discussion. Upon the liberty of the press the basis of the constitution was known to rest. Take these away, and the whole fabric must fall. No man would deny that there were many abuses and defects in the practice of the constitution. Its chief value consisted in the excellence of the foundation ; and, when that was destroyed, the rest would not be worth preserving. A remedy might have been found for almost any other shock which it could have received. Had Parliament thought proper to alter the succession to the crown from the present family on the throne, dreadful convulsions would no doubt have ensued ; but the investiture of a new prince with the sovereign power might have quieted the commotion. Had Parliament made a bold and open attack upon the trial by jury, a speedy remedy would have been found in the deluge of argument and declamation which would immediately have issued from the press. Petitions would have been poured in, remonstrating against the assault on public liberty ; and the voice of the people, raised with unanimity and maintained with firmness, would have awed the proudest minister into submission. When, however, the power of speaking was taken away, what was there left but the patience of implicit submission ? What hopes could be entertained that grievances would be removed, when those who felt them dared not complain ? In such a case it would cost him little anxiety that a spirit of resistance was found impossible to be suppressed. He believed a spirit of discontent to be pretty general in the country at present ; and he had no hesitation in saying that it originated in a bad government, in wicked and ruinous measures, and in the blind and unmeaning confidence which the people had too long reposed in an unfortunate and desperate administration. The discontent might, perhaps, exist in some degree previous to the war ; but he affirmed, that it had spread in consequence of it into a much more general and alarming extent. If the discontent originated in French principles,

ples, it was indebted for its currency to the measures of British ministers. He wished to bring them to issue upon this point. They said the people of England are loyal; so said he. They asserted that there were malcontents in the country; in that he also agreed. He would nevertheless ask, whether the danger to be apprehended from French principles was greater at present or two years ago? Let them say either the one or the other; he entreated them, for God's sake, not to say both. For his own part, he thought it was greater than at present. If it was, he demanded if the increase of danger was not owing to the calamitous war, which was unjustly commenced, and had been unfortunately prosecuted? If the danger was diminished, why would they apply a more hazardous remedy, than when the disease was described as raging with its utmost fury? Whatever was the degree of danger in which the country stood, he was firmly of opinion that it would be increased, rather than lessened, by the remedy proposed. The danger had principally arisen from a system of terror which ministers had adopted; and the most effectual mode of prolonging the danger was by continuing this system, of which the present Bill seemed to form a most prominent part.

With regard to the danger of universal suffrage and annual parliaments, they had been represented as the cause of the subversion of the old French government, and they were described as the instruments employed by the Corresponding Society to demolish the British constitution. He professed himself no friend to either the one or the other; he quoted the high authority of the duke of Richmond, by whom they had been supported, and thence inferred, that the opinions of those in the higher and lower stations of society were treated in a very different style of respect. When the members of Corresponding Societies at this time think, as the duke of Richmond thought some years ago, a general outcry is raised, and it is exclaimed, "Will you presume to touch the sacred ark of the constitution with unhallowed hands?" Nothing, however, is said, when a minister comes forward, not, indeed, with unhallowed hands, (a minister's hands are like those of the high-priest of old, which it would be sacrilege even to look at) not to touch it only but to tear it to pieces.

The sole reason assigned for this outrage against the constitution was, that when new occasions offer, new changes must take place. Nothing new was necessary on the decay of Old Sarum, and the annihilation, but the name of the rotten borough, of England; the late meeting of the Corresponding

Society had however ushered in a new æra in the history of the world. He urged upon the serious consideration of ministers, the situation into which they had reduced the country, and implored them to abandon a system pregnant with ruin; and to employ every lenient and conciliatory means to gain the affections of the people, and attach them to the constitution. He said he knew there was a spirit in the country to ward off the ravages of anarchy; he hoped also there was a spirit to resist the strides of oppression. Mr. Fox concluded by saying, that he would not contend that the war alone was the cause of the scarcity of provisions; but that it was an integral part, one of the principal causes of the scarcity could not be disputed. As long as it continued, the same effect would be continually increasing, and must also be felt for a considerable time after peace should be concluded; for this was not one of the cases in which there were reasonable grounds for expecting that, "*sublata causa tollitur effectus.*"

The *Solicitor General* offered a few remarks in the way of explanation.

Sir Francis Basset defended himself from an insinuation which he conceived to have been made against him by Mr. Fox, of having used language which might be construed into an avowal of *libertine* principles. He would not retort upon the Right Honourable Gentleman by a charge of his being a favourer of principles that were *jacobinical*, though his speech of that night favoured of them a little more strongly than was usually heard in that house. He thought it necessary to say thus much, as it was of infinitely more importance to plain men like him not to be misrepresented, than it was to persons of Mr. Fox's powers, who were always capable of explaining any thing in which they considered themselves to be misinterpreted or misunderstood.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that as he had repeatedly delivered his sentiments upon the Bill, he felt but little inclined unnecessarily to take up the attention of the house, particularly as most part of what had been already said that day had little connection with the question. Under this description he did not include the comparison which Mr. Fox had thought proper to draw between a revolution in this country in favour of the house of Stuart, and a revolution in favour of that kind of government which French principles would recommend and inculcate. No man could be more sensible than he was of the dreadful calamities that the nation would sustain by the re-establishment of a popish pretender, who would, no doubt, endeavour to subvert our liberties,

liberties, our religion, and our laws, and possibly he might succeed in his object. He had no hesitation, however, in declaring, that were he to choose between two such horrible alternatives, he would heartfully prefer the restoration of the pretender to that cruel and desolating system of anarchy, which would radically destroy all those principles by which social order was maintained. He scrupled not to agree with the Right Honourable Gentleman in declaring, that were we under the same circumstances that pressed on our ancestors, we should be equally ready to make the same sacrifices that they had done in so necessary a resistance; and he further admitted, that when we expressed ourselves equally willing to risk our lives in an opposition to either jacobitical or jacobinical principles, we had no more to offer, nor were we any longer to seek for any practical difference. It happened conveniently for his purpose, that the arguments and illustrations employed by the Right Honourable Gentleman, furnished him with materials which would serve for an answer to most of his arguments, as far as he had urged any thing closely connected with the subject. Of this comparison between the two kinds of revolutions alluded to in particular, without attempting to reason on which side the choice ought to preponderate, it was sufficient to say, that we were ready with our lives to resist the introduction of either.

Here then the Chancellor of the Exchequer said, he wished to pause, and beseech the Right Hon. Gentleman to adopt the sage counsels of his ancestors, with the same ardour which he expressed when he declared his desire to imitate the valour of their arms. Our ancestors expelled the family of the Stuarts, and established the glorious and immortal revolution; in the first instance by the sword; but their bravery might have been ineffectual, if they had not secured their object by legislative provisions. It was in this manner, more than by personal valour, that they preserved the constitution. What was the Bill of Rights itself, but a measure adopted by our ancestors in consequence of their finding themselves under the same circumstances? They declared it to be high treason to dispute the Queen's authority, to deny that the Parliament was competent to confine and limit the succession, and, finally, to render attempts to introduce a system, different from that which they had established by the laws, feloniously penal. Upon examining the present Bill it would be found, that their example was rigidly adhered to, and preventive measures resorted to on motives of policy and prudence, in order to guard against that extreme which would make it necessary for many to risk

their lives in a contest, and be involved in all the miseries that attend a civil war. One great recommendation of this temporary measure was, that it strictly adhered to the examples of former times; and while it added to the general security, made no innovation on the constitution, or, in the smallest degree, weakened the spirit of the laws. Our ancestors, in times of danger, and even during that interval which took place between the deposition and restoration of the monarchy, adhered, as much as so peculiar a situation would admit, to ancient forms, and conducted the public business by means of both houses of parliament, if that assembly could properly be called a Parliament, when it was actually deprived of one of its component parts.

Were there no precedents, no land-marks, to guide their proceedings on the present emergency? In days of difficulty and danger, which had threatened one branch of the legislature, and when doubts had arisen respecting the competency of parliament to legislate in one particular case, limiting the succession of the crown; our ancestors made a law suitable to the occasion. But at this time what was the enemy that we had to contend with and what the matter to be repelled? Not an attack upon one branch of the legislature, not a doubt about the right to legislate in a particular case; the right to legislate at all was questioned, and the legality of monarchy itself in any shape was denied. Was that, he begged to ask a proper time to sit still, and refrain from taking vigorous and effectual measures, merely because they might deviate in some degree from established practice? The parallel that had been attempted to be drawn between the measures of the executive government at this time, and those of the house of Stuart, in no degree applied. In the days of the Charles's, the people were above all taught to look up to Parliament for safety and protection: they might undoubtedly look elsewhere for assistance, but Parliament was the center in which all their hopes and dependence rested, and in which alone they were led to expect redress for their grievances: such had been the example of their ancestors at the revolution, and as it was before their eyes, it ought to regulate their proceedings. The Honourable Gentleman he observed, had talked of risking his life in defence of the constitution; that was not required; the Honourable Gentleman was only called upon to apply such salutary laws to the present state of the country as the circumstances demand, and the risking of lives, for the present at least, would be unnecessary: but precaution must be taken in time. The revolution itself might be influenced as a strong proof of the propriety

propriety of the measure. At the revolution the crown became vacant; our ancestors in their wisdom retained the forms of the constitution, and considered it to be still subsisting. The two houses of parliament and not the body of the people, were resorted to as the means by which the legislature, in its collective and entire form, was to be restored; this proved that with parliament alone, the right of making alterations in the laws had always rested.

The next point to be considered had been insisted upon much in the house, and, as he understood, made very industrious use of out of it, viz. that the present Bill was calculated to create a difference, and cause a separation between the lower and the higher orders of the people. The effect of this Bill, he was ready to maintain, would be diametrically the reverse. The system of dividing the orders of the community was that which formed the grand spring and power of Jacobinism, which the present Bill was evidently calculated to oppose, to check, and to suppress. It was by exciting the envy and hatred of the poor against those in higher stations, by holding out to them the hope of exchanging their conditions, and by representing property as the easy prey of the indigent, the idle, and the licentious, that the profligate principles of Jacobinism had succeeded in destroying all social order in France, and the same end had been aimed at by the same means, in all other parts of Europe.

Under our happy constitution, he believed there was no man of rank or property, at this time, so negligent of his duty, and so unacquainted with his interest, as to draw a line of separation between himself and those that were below him, in rank, affluence, or degree. What nation in the world did exist, or had been known to exist, in which, the great and the low were placed at so little a distance, and so slightly separated? A continued and well cemented connection, which could not easily be dissolved, was so visible, that it was impossible to fix upon any link in the general chain where the union of the parts did not immediately appear. The middle class derived supply, vigour, and support, from that below it; diffused it through all around; communicated and received reciprocal aid from that which was above it; and an animating spring gave that activity and general circulation of benefits to the whole, which composed the order of well regulated society.

The manner by which the Right Hon. Gentleman had attempted to prove that tendency of this Bill was to make such invidious distinctions was most extraordinary. The

Bill had been held out, as a Bill which proscribed all meetings whatsoever from petitioning parliament, except such as were licensed. So far from this, the Bill left all established meetings precisely as they were before. The requiring a license had been stated in all cases as an intolerable evil, it was nevertheless, singular enough, that *not to require a license* was considered as a still worse evil, on account of the partiality of the principle. Let him ask, what was the partiality? Was it that all other meetings but those that were licensed were to be abolished? No such thing; they were merely to be put under some new restrictions, which should make them more resemble the regular meetings, which were not to be subjected to a license.

To come to the main question. It was distinctly this. First, does the Bill so abridge and limit the right of petitioning parliament as to leave it insufficient for the purpose of affording due constitutional security? Secondly, does the Bill impose any ineffectual, superfluous, and unnecessary restraints? In order to judge upon these questions, he would consider what were the limitations imposed by the Bill on this right of petitioning. A previous notice of the intended meetings was, in certain cases, to be required. The meetings of corporate bodies were not required to give any notice whatever; meetings called by a certain number of justices, meetings called by the lords lieutenant of counties, or by sheriffs, were all excepted from the obligation; how unfair then was it to call the Bill, as it had been called, 'an extinction of the right to petition,' when, in fact, that channel through which petitions usually come, was still left open; and he was as ready as any man to admit broadly, that *supposed or real grievances might, as matter of right, be presented to Parliament by all ranks of people*. He must, however, at the same time remark, that he did not consider those to be the best friends of the constitution, or the lower ranks of people, who were always goading them to bring forward petitions, and encouraging the agitation and discussion of public affairs; among those too who, of all men, from their education, their habits of life, and their means of information, were indisputably the least capable of exercising sound judgment on such topics. The right of petitioning then remained as formerly, excepting in certain cases, to which he had alluded.

With regard to the observations made by the Rt. Hon. Gent. in his interference for procuring a more equal representation of the people in parliament, he said, he would do him the justice to say, that he never had encouraged the wild, visionary, and

and mischievous plan of universal suffrage and annual parliaments. He had felt, what every man of sense and observation must feel, that the House of Commons, composed as it was, was the virtual representation of the people of England; the sole matter in doubt was, whether the members had such an identity of interest with those who had no voice in election of representatives, as would secure to the latter the consideration, to which, as Englishmen, they ought to be entitled. In the meetings held upon that subject formerly, though some of them had not been regularly convened by the sheriffs, he well remembered that their proceedings were looked to with more jealousy than the proceedings of those meetings which were assembled in a regular manner.

So little had been urged in opposition, to the provisions of the Bill, that it was unnecessary for him to argue much in their defence. The notice to be given of meetings held avowedly for the discussion of public measures, had been so modified as to retain little of that formidable appearance in which gentlemen at first represented it to bear; indeed, the honourable gentleman himself had confessed, it was that part of the Bill to which he saw the least objection. So necessary did public advertisements, in order to convene large bodies of men on political questions, strike him to be, that the clause would seem a superfluous precaution, if it were not for the peculiar construction of the Corresponding societies, which, by their divisions and subdivisions, had not only the means of secret communication, but also of prompt execution of their designs, however alarming, however dangerous.

It had been much insisted on that a main objection to the Bill was, that these meetings were hereafter to be held under the inspection of magistrates. The force of this objection would surely be done away, when it was considered that this provision only set all other meetings on the same footing with those which had always been authorized in their corporate capacities; for in regular meetings the sheriff was necessarily and of course always present. The next point complained of, had been the mode of dispersing of meetings. Was it possible for the house not to have felt the danger of some late meetings, and did they not feel the necessity of checking them? If they did not, he would only say, that this was not the time to trifle, if they did not seize the opportunity of applying a preventive, they might soon lose the power of exercising their own functions in that house. For this reason it was highly necessary to grant new discretionary power to magistrates, a degree

degree of additional power, guarded by the degree of additional responsibility attached to them. He owned he felt some astonishment at one argument coming from a quarter from which he least expected it, a declaration that struck at the very foundation of the administration of public justice in this country. A learned gentleman, of the first professional character and practice, of the finest talents, the most brilliant abilities and the highest fame, had urged as an argument against the Bill, and put it in a general and unqualified manner, that the magistracy of the country were necessarily corrupt; an invective against a body of persons, to whose exertions, in their situation, the country owed the most signal services. With equal surprise he had heard the same learned and Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Erskine) who, while he arraigned the discretion granted to the magistrates under this Bill, acknowledged at the same time, that they were already authorised to exercise the same powers under the existing laws, namely, the Riot Act, and a statute of Henry IV. which had been alluded to by the judge (the late Lord Mansfield) on the trial of Lord George Gordon. Without insisting, for the present, on the illiberality of the suggestion, its inconsistency was glaring, and it might be proper to consider, in another point of view, how a meeting convened by a sheriff could be esteemed a meeting held only by permission of his Majesty's ministers. That sheriffs were appointed by his Majesty, from lists made out by the judges of assize, of the persons most capable of serving that office, was certainly true. Although the office of sheriff was an office of dignity and honour, were he to ask, whether his Majesty in conferring it, bestowed a favour which called for any great gratitude on the part of the receiver, he believed that in most instances he should be answered in the negative. Added to this, when the appointment was once conferred, the king had no power to remove the person appointed sheriff; and upon the whole, there was scarcely any office which was attended with a greater degree of independence. Other magistrates, who exercised offices for which, as all our law writers declared the nation was indebted to them, and who, in the service of their country, every day exposed themselves to insults and dangers, he could not but lament that any professional gentleman should be found to speak of them with such undeserved indignity. It well merited the close examination of gentlemen, he said, to what extent, and to what extent only, the powers of magistrates under the present Bill went to prevent meetings, if their designs seemed calculated to obtain redress through any other

other medium than the legislature, and to disperse them, if the magistrates were of opinion, that the proceedings held, or the speeches delivered at any meeting had an illegal tendency. In fine, the sole object of the Bill was, that the people should look to parliament, and to parliament alone, for the redress of such grievances as they might have to complain of, with a confident reliance of relief being afforded them, if their complaints should be well founded and practically remediable. That it should be understood that the condition of no man was to be broken, but he could find a legal means of bringing his grievances before his representatives in parliament, and submit them to their consideration; but that he would not leave a door open, through which a torrent might rush in, and overwhelm the constitution. It behoved them to take care that menaces were not conveyed to parliament under the pretext of petitions, and that they were not made the vehicles of indirect libels, fabricated at meetings convened under the pretence of very different objects, by men whose real purpose it was to undermine and subvert the constitution. After a concise but pointed series of answers to the several objections that had been urged against the Bill, the Chancellor of the Exchequer concluded by saying, that, upon the whole, a just comparison ought to be made between the evils that might follow from this Bill, and the dangers that might arise were the house to reject it. The balance being struck on this alternative, the next question was, whether it was not necessary that the people should know it was to parliament alone that they must look for any alteration of the law, and that, when their grievances were known and stated, they would not look to parliament in vain for redress? The house and the public were equally interested in this Bill, and so was every class of the people, as fair and constitutional petitioners; it therefore only remained for gentlemen to decide whether they did their duty best for the interests of their constituents or not, by entertaining or rejecting a Bill founded on such principles.

Mr. *Erskine* explained. He declared he only said, that, by the present laws the magistrates would have the power to disperse meetings held for seditious purposes, or likely to tend to sedition; and he must persist to contend it never was in the contemplation of the law to prevent the meeting of the people, to consult on their grievances, to represent them decently, and present petitions to any branch of the legislature.

Lord Hood rose merely to offer a few observations on the late meeting at Palace yard. The number of which that meeting was said to consist, seemed to him to have been ex-

exceedingly exaggerated. Gentlemen had talked of 30,000 persons being present; he had been assured that the number did not exceed 5000. Whatever might have been the number, his lordship professed himself ready to confess, that the meeting had observed the greatest order and decorum, and that the few words he was desirous of addressing to them, were received with silence and attention.

He attended the meeting in Palace-yard, and had requested many of his friends to attend it, because it was his intention to object to its proceedings, as he could not consider it competent to express the sentiments of the householders of Westminster. The unanimity of opinion against the measures before the house, was not so perfect as from appearances some gentlemen were led to suppose or chose to represent; a great number, certainly held up both their hands in approbation of the resolution proposed to them, still he knew there were many present who held up *no hand* at all, but remained silence spectators of what passed.

Mr. Fox expressed his satisfaction on hearing the noble lord bear testimony to the peaceable and orderly behaviour of the meeting, and have the honest candour to confess that the observations and objections he had to offer, were received with becoming attention and respect; especially as this confession of the noble lord completely refuted the accounts given of the meeting by certain persons and public prints, who asserted that one side only was heard, and that no respect or attention was paid to the other. With regard to the precise number of persons present, Mr. Fox said, he could not take upon himself to ascertain: all he could say was, that the meeting was far more numerous than any other he had ever seen collected together on a similar occasion, either at Covent Garden or elsewhere. Much less would he pretend to say, that all those who attended at the meeting were householders of Westminster, for such was not the intention of those who advised or called the meeting; their wish was, that it should be composed of the inhabitants of Westminster, at large, all of whom were equally affected by the present measures, against the passing of which they had assembled to remonstrate.

Mr. Mainwaring said, he felt and had long seen the necessity of speedily adopting some strong and effectual measure in order to stem the torrent of sedition and political poison that so widely spread, and threatened to overwhelm and infect the whole country. He declared, he could not approve the measure proposed in all its parts. It appeared to him ob-

objectionable in two points: one that which entrusted magistrates with a discretionary power, for the exercise of which he thought no man adequately qualified; the other, that which prohibited all public lecturing on any given subject, without a license, whereby he conceived the diffusion of useful knowledge would be checked, and impediments raised against the cultivation and improvement of the arts and sciences. He thought it right to state these objections, but said he would, nevertheless, vote for the second reading of the Bill, without pledging himself to give it any further support, unless the provisions which appeared to him obnoxious were meliorated or withdrawn.

Sir John Rous, in allusion to an observation made by Mr. Sheridan, said, that he, for one, would not fear or hesitate to face his constituents, though he commended and would vote for the measure then under discussion, with the necessity of which both he and they were deeply impressed. In proof of this, he read to the house the result of a meeting held by the freeholders of the county of Suffolk, in which they instructed their representatives to support every measure that could tend to the safety and security of his majesty's person and government, and to check those seditious assemblies which had so justly alarmed the nation.

Mr. *Sheridan* said a few words in explanation, after which the question being loudly and repeatedly called for, the house divided.

Ayes (for the second reading) _____

Noes _____

Majority _____

HOUSE OF LORDS.

WEDNESDAY, November 18.

The land and malt Bills were read a second time.—Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

WEDNESDAY, November 18.

A petition of the Mayor, Aldermen, and chief Burgesses, of the borough of *Newport*, in the *Isle of Wight*, in common hall assembled, was presented to the house and read; setting forth

that observing, by the votes of the house, that a committee is appointed to take into consideration the present corn laws, the petitioners beg leave to observe, that, in their opinion, an effectual means of lessening the present high price of corn will be by prohibiting the sale of corn by sample, and, of course to compel the farmer to bring his corn to market, and that, within the last ten years, this practice of bringing by sample, has become almost universal, and few loads of corn are now seen in the market at Newpoit, whereas, some few years back, two hundred waggon loads have been frequently seen there on a market day; that the good effects of bringing corn were, that a poor person might buy a sack or small quantity fitted to his purse, at the first and cheapest hand, and besides, that it contributed to lower the price, for the corn being brought to market, the farmer was content to sell it cheaper rather than carry it back again; and another good and pleasing effect was produced, that it tended to shew the stock and abundance of the country, when the farmers from the different parts exhibited their stores to public view; and therefore praying, that the practice of selling corn by sample may be dis-
countenanced by the house, and that such other measures for reducing the price of corn may be adopted, as the wisdom of the house shall suggest.

Referred to the Select Committee on the corn trade.

LABOURERS IN HUSBANDRY.

Mr. *Whitbread* said, that at this critical period, he found himself much interested by the situation and distresses of an important and respectable class of people in this country; he meant those who were employed in the laborious part of the various branches of husbandry: the labouring poor were, in his idea, the most valuable part of the community, taken in several points of view, and yet, in many parts of Great Britain, no other description of subjects suffered so much from the hardships of their several occupations in times of distress, particularly from their not having any means to remedy their sufferings. For many years past the price of provisions had been so high, that the wages paid for the services of the labouring poor; (though, in some counties, throughout the kingdom, more than others,) were utterly disproportionate to their services, and the excessively high price of corn for some months past, no class of people had suffered more, and to their great numbers and patience, the hardships of their condition. They had not assumed, as others had, the name of their grievances, they were therefore the more en-
titled

titled to the particular attention of the House. Artisans, and other working people, contrive, at times of public scarcity, and at periods when they deem it justifiable to demand an advance of wages, and frequently oblige their employers to submit to it, but husbandmen had no such remedy at hand, it consequently became the peculiar duty of parliament to provide for their relief.

A statute of Elizabeth, at present in existence, gave justices the power to regulate annually, at the sessions next after Easter, the wages of labouring men; owing to various causes, however, it had become obsolete, one great reason was because as it empowered the magistrates to fix the price of labour entirely to the favour of those who employed while the labourer was unprovided with means of enforcing his claims, the law therefore operated entirely in favour of the opulent, and left the working man at his discretionary consideration, or at the mercy of the justices, who had long ceased to take the subject under their cognisance. Mr. Whitbread said, he threw out these observations at that time, wholly with a view to call the attention of the house to a subject so interesting at present. He did not mean to make any specific motion immediately on the subject, but at a future period he would submit it in form for their mature consideration and decision.

STARCH BILL.

The house having resolved itself into a committee on the Bill to prohibit the making of starch from articles of human food, and for encouraging its importation into this country,

Mr. Fox said, other articles, as well as those enumerated in the Bill, were made of wheat, which therefore he conceived ought to be included: he understood that there were many other materials of which an excellent paste might be made, but that wheaten flour was at present almost generally in use for that purpose; that provisions to prevent the consumption of articles necessary for subsistence, would be more particularly expedient and wise, when substitutes of a different nature, though good for the purposes to which paste was applied, were equally known.

Mr. Rose said, if what had fallen from the Right Hon Gentleman should turn out, upon enquiry, to be of that consequence which he appeared to think, it would certainly be proper to include paste under the number of restricted articles, although he had reason to believe that the chief consumption of materials not commonly used for food, rested with hair powder, starch, and blue.

Mr. Fox said, he was well assured the object was much more considerable than might at first be imagined: he instanced the great quantities of flour used in the houses of the higher classes of people on the article of paper-hangings, in which paste made of wheaten flour was, he believed, with little exception, in general use; paste-board also was another article, the quantities of which made, would not be readily believed on a superficial view: he, however, meant no more than to offer the suggestion, that it might be made use of in the committee above stairs, if the committee thought proper.

Mr. Rider said, the suggestion was not a new one, it had already been under the consideration of the committee.

The blank in the Bill was filled up with the date to which it extends, the 1st of February, 1797.

Several clauses were moved, and added to the Bill, for restricting the importation of packages of starch, &c. less than 144lb. averdupoise weight, for the forfeiture of such articles imported, if not entered, and certified to proper officers, stamps or seals affixed, and exposed in open Hold.

General Smith asked how persons in foreign parts were to become acquainted with this act, the operation of which was to take place immediately?

The Chancellor of the Exchequer explained, distinctly, that the Bill provided against such contingency.

THE BUDGET.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer gave notice, that he meant to bring before the house, the subject of the Supply in a committee of Ways and Means, on Wednesday the 3d of December.

WRITS FOR ELECTIONS.

Read a first time Mr. Dent's Bill for forwarding the conveyance of writs expeditiously for the elections of members of parliament.

It enacts that when a new parliament is about to be called, the messenger of the court of chancery shall carry the writs for London to the sheriffs, and for other places to the post-master, who shall make a proper entry of the state of receipt and dispatch, &c. &c. Ordered to be printed.

CORN COMMITTEE.

The House resolved itself into a committee, on the high price of corn.

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The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* rose to move some resolutions in consequence of the report of the Select Committee. He said it would be unnecessary in him to go at large into the subject, or do more than state these resolutions.

I. "That a bounty of 20s. a quarter should be given for wheat flour imported from any part of Europe, south of Cape Finisterre, the Mediterranean, or Africa, with a proportionate bounty *per barrel*, until there should have arrived 300,000 quarters.

II. "15s. *per quarter*, and a proportionate sum *per barrel*, for all the other ports of Europe, for the first 500,000 quarters.

III. "15s. *per quarter*, and a proportionate sum *per barrel*, from British America, and the United States, for the first 300,000 quarters. And, after the specified quantities should arrive, 10s. *per quarter*, generally from all places. Also 5s. *per quarter* for Indian corn, for the first 500,000 quarters, and 3s. *per quarter* afterwards.

"All which bounties should continue until the 31st of August, 1796."

Mr. *Hussey* said, he had been given to understand, that there was but little chance of getting, by importation, the number of quarters on which the first bounties would attach; and he thought it impolicy to specify any quantity, as the knowledge that so large a quantity would be wanted, would tend to raise the price of wheat in foreign markets. Another circumstance occurred to him, which was, he thought the bounty offered for wheat from America too low. Wheat, in America, was two dollars a bushel, that was 9s. British. The freight *per bushel*, from America, was 2s. The insurance *per bushel* 1s. The merchant's profit it would be proper to state at 5s. *per quarter*, and the risques to which insurance did not extend, such as the risque of the corn being damaged; these added, made *per bushel* 1s. 6d. The gross charges were *per bushel* 15s. 6d. The drawback of the bounty *per bushel* was not quite 2s. The nett cost to the merchant, when the corn arrived in this country, was 11s. 6d. On this statement then, which no man could contradict, would it be worth the while of merchants to speculate from their expectation of what the market price here would be?

Mr. *Hussey* said, he was so convinced of the propriety of his objections, that he believed he should be necessitated to divide the house, and propose to raise the bounty from 15s. to 20s. *per quarter* on Wheat from America.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, in answer to the objections of Mr. *Hussey*, that the Select Committee had made their report from the fullest information they could as yet receive,

ceive, and after the best consideration they could give the subject, he therefore could not help being of opinion, that they had determined right as to the proportion of bounty. With respect to the danger, that fixing the number of quarters which were to receive the first bounty, would raise the price of foreign markets, he would say, that the committee thought there must be a limit, because, if they were to offer this bounty to an unlimited quantity, it would have the effect of raising the markets still higher than if it were to be limited to any number; and there being a limit, it would also have the good effect of hastening the supply, and tempting the merchants to be competitors, and to run a race which should be the first to receive a higher price. It was also proper to extend limitation; if it were to be confined to a smaller number of quarters the merchants would be afraid that they would not arrive in time to get the first bounty, which would prevent many from interfering at all.

General Smith bestowed high encomiums on the Select Committee, for the great earnestness and close attention which they had paid to the important objects to which they were appointed; he thought it but just that the country should know that they had rendered it meritorious service. He entered into a close and minute examination of the report, and in answer to the declaration of the minister, that no competition of government with the merchant would take place, whereby the bounties held out to merchants would be sufficient inducements to them to embark in the trade, and procure an ample supply, he denied that there were reasonable grounds for such a declaration; he had not yet heard any merchant venture to say, nor had it been said, he believed, by any of the witnesses examined by the committee, that a supply was certain, even with such inducements as had been mentioned. Merchants, it was notorious, were bound by no maxims of policy; gain alone was their object. If there should be a competition, and our market was not as high as another, the bounty, if not sufficient to make up the difference, would render the measure abortive.

Mr. Burton said, if government were obliged to enter into the market expressly, the effect would, in all probability, be a general stagnation of the trade of the merchants.

Mr. Lechmere said, that after the long debate of the preceding night, he would not take up much of the time of the house that evening. The importance of the subject, however, required that he should not be silent, the lives of the country, the poor, were in great affliction, and, as he had seen himself the

the poor man's friend, he thought that no means should be left untaken to relieve them: on this occasion, while a bounty was debating on the importation, he thought that there should be some attention, perhaps as much, paid to exportation, which he understood, from good authority, was carrying on to a most shameful extent, and in a shameful manner. Ships, he said, were sitting out in our ports, and laden with grain: they were professedly destined for Guernsey, &c. but notice was duly conveyed to the French in that neighbourhood, who met them, and after conveying them safe into French ports, where they received hard money for their freight, the vessels returned for fresh cargoes of the same commodity.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* interrupted Mr. Lechmere, and said, that the business brought forward by him was an interruption, and properly belonged to the Select Committee.

Mr. Lechmere said, it was a very important consideration.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* declared that the strictest orders had been given by the executive government on that subject.

Mr. Lambton gave his assent to the plan proposed by the committee. He stated also that in the county to which he belonged (Durham) much agitation prevailed on account of the scarcity and high price of grain. With a very honest and benevolent intention, no doubt, subscriptions had been instituted for the purpose of purchasing corn, and selling it at reduced prices. His colleague and he had been applied to, to give their aid to this design, but they both doubted how far it was proper to encourage a measure which destroyed all fair speculation, and produced the same bad effect on a narrow scale which had been allowed to result from the interference of government with the business of private merchants. Being, however, extremely anxious to alleviate the distress so severely felt by the people in that quarter, he wished to know whether a supply might not be allowed to be obtained from that grain which, he saw from the Report, government had in their hands.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* explained, by saying, that there had been at a particular time, but it was not to be concluded that such was now the case.

Mr. Huxley said, from what he had heard, he was fully convinced, that the measure which he proposed would be found more efficacious than those of the committee. In reply to the declaration, that the present procuring was the great object, if the country was but assured of a supply for a year certain, the effect, he was persuaded, would operate immediately; if

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the farmer who at present held back his corn, under the idea of a better market when there may be a greater scarcity, was satisfied that such a scarcity would not exist, the quantity thrown directly into the market would at once satisfy all the Right Hon. Gentleman's wishes, and the public wants: he was therefore, he said, for the highest bounty; and, in his opinion, many merchants, who in general knew those things better than any committee of that house, joined with him.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* was sorry that he should have occasion to differ on any subject from the honourable gentleman, and the more particularly where their object was the same: if the means proposed by the committee were not sufficient to answer the purpose, the defect was in the principle, as he conceived, since the difference of the bounties were rendered necessary by the difference of the circumstances of the trade to the Mediterranean and America; by the situation of which the rate of bounty had been regulated.

Sir Francis Baring said, the difference of freight from the Mediterranean would certainly, in time of peace, be less than from America; and in times of war there would be a material difference, if ships had or had not convoy, damage of corn was unavoidable; and, in his opinion, the bounty should be as high on the American import.

Mr. *Fox* agreed with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on some parts of this subject, he owned however that on the other hand the question became important, as to the probable effect the bounty would have with regard to importation of corn from America; he did not see why the bounty should be higher for the importation from the Mediterranean than from America. Let gentlemen recollect that there were important points connected with this—Whether the supply ought to be trusted entirely to individual merchants, or whether any thing should be done by government in that respect was an important thing. In his opinion it was proper to trust to merchants; but he must also observe, that it would have been better if government had left this subject last year, as it was proposed to be done at this time. He did not state this, as a matter of reproach to ministers for what they did, he believed they did what appeared to them to be the best for the public; he nevertheless thought there was a reasonable probability that this bounty would produce a considerable degree of assistance to this country with respect to corn, and, therefore, he felt disposed to adopt the opinion of the committee, and the resolutions proposed by the Right Hon. Gentleman, which were founded

founded upon that opinion. At the same time he must confess, that when he adopted that opinion, he felt he did it with a considerable degree of hazard. He wished some mode might be thought of by which there might be an experiment made soon, and by which they might judge of the probable effect of this measure. He desired to be informed whether if this bounty was to last for a short period it would have the effect proposed to a considerable, or indeed to any extent. The exertions of individual merchants might not be so effectual now as they might have been on former occasions. He also wished to know whether this might not be done to a more limited extent; and if that should be found defective, government ought to take up the subject, that if one measure failed, the other might be tried. He thought it would have been fortunate indeed for this country if there had been such a Committee as the present last year, and that the committee should have been of the same opinion that they were at this time. He repeated it, that he did not blame government for the part they had taken upon the subject. The question certainly had some delicacy and some danger in it, and therefore if the step the ministers took last year happened to turn out an ineffectual one, he did not think it fair to blame them for it; he must however observe, that if, upon all occasions, as he believed the case to be, the functions of the House of Commons were better adapted for promoting the public good than those of the Board of Trade, he wished to see them oftener exerted. He meant to say nothing disrespectful of that Board, which was appointed by his majesty. Nor did he mean to say any thing against those who composed it. He could not help wishing that the functions of the House of Commons were oftener exercised upon these occasions. He must further observe, that if that had been the case last year, the public might have derived the advantages long ago which they now had in expectation; and perhaps more than they could hope for at present; because the exertions of individual merchants would have been more important to the public last year than they could be at this period; and they could not conceal from themselves that there was not a certainty of merchants speculating on the importation of corn to a sufficient amount. The conversation in the House upon the subject he thought should take place; for there did not seem to him that there was a well-founded hope that the supply of corn from abroad would amount to thirteen thousand quarters within the time specified.

With regard to the part of this scarcity which was owing to the war, he owned that was a great cause, although there were

also other causes. The war tended to create this high price of corn by enhancing the value of every article of life, not with us only, but also over almost every other part of the globe with which we had any trade or connection. If this were true upon confined points, it was true also on the larger scale, and must generally affect the price of all commodities. From all that had been said, he confessed, he had not yet found a reason why the bounty should be less for the importation of corn from America than from the Mediterranean, and therefore he thought there ought to be an explanation of the American bounty.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said he did not state an opinion of his own upon the bounty, with as much confidence as he did the opinion of the Committee. That opinion was that 15s. *per* quarter for importation of corn from America was adequate, and that nothing less than 20s. was adequate from the Mediterranean. Nor was this the opinion of the Committee merely, it was the opinion also of persons of experience; persons in fact who were likely to act under it. The bringing of corn from the Mediterranean was attended with some difficulty, exclusive of the length of the voyage; many inconveniences arose from local circumstances, which would continue to operate while we were at war with France. Another consideration was the price of wheat in America was only 64 instead of 72s. *per* quarter; on these grounds he proposed the difference of price that he had stated between corn from America and corn from the Mediterranean.

With respect to the mode proposed of giving the bounty for a limited time, shorter than that which he had stated, he apprehended it would be attended with inconvenience; because as no man would know what his neighbour would bring, nor whether the time would not elapse before he could make much profit, the desire for collecting the corn would be lessened.

Whether it was wise to make an experiment, and reserve to government the power of interfering in time, if the present plan did not answer expectation? was a question, which he thought turned on bad policy. If any thing could be clear upon the subject, it must be that two different systems could not succeed at the same time; and by attempting to preserve the advantages of both, they might, he feared, find themselves unable to retain the benefit of either. If the merchant had the possible prospect of a competition with government, his motive for speculating would be damped; for which he was ready to declare, that unless government were to take the matter altogether into their own hands, they had better have nothing to do with it. Whether there had been reasons sufficiently cogent

to justify government for the purchases they made last year, was a matter he would not then discuss; if ever there should be any reason to discuss that point, he should be ready to shew they were amply justified in what they did. He differed with the Right Honourable Gentleman, in his idea of bringing all the business of the Board of Trade before the House. The immense business of that board required great and minute attention, which could not always be given by the House, and it was to be recollected that that Board transacted much business when parliament were not sitting.

With regard to the question, how far the war produced the present scarcity? he must observe, that before any person came to a conclusion upon that business, he ought to have all the circumstances of the case before him, and to be master of the whole subject. He hoped that the house and the public would have an opportunity of judging; but in judging properly, they must know what was the quantity of corn produced in the kingdom, and what had come into the country since the commencement of the war, and which, but for the war, would not have come in at all; what had gone out: what were the numbers on our part to whom corn had been sent, and how many had been maintained with corn from abroad; what the produce of the seasons had been, and a variety of other circumstances, which it was unnecessary for him then to enumerate. These should be compared together, and from the comparison of all the facts, something like a conclusion might be drawn as to the effect which the war had on the scarcity. He said, he was far from wishing to avoid the discussion, on the contrary, he trusted that the whole subject would some day be fully discussed.

Mr. Fox allowed, that what had fallen from the Right Honourable Gentleman had great weight; he had never entertained a thought that government and the merchant could go on together in the importation; the object should be exclusively, that of one or the other, and he believed the mercantile spirit of the country was adequate to very great ends: he was sorry to learn, however, that their exertions were also extremely necessary; as the quantity of corn of the last crop appeared, from the enquiries of the Committee, to be much less than he before thought it had been.

Mr. Hussey said, he thought still the pressure would be at the end of the year, and that the surest and best reliance was on the countries round the Baltic and on America, to which the bounties should be extended on the larger scale.

Sir Francis Baring said, the American merchants in this country perhaps were most able, because they were the most

active and numerous of any other to embark in this trade. He had held conversation with many of them on the subject, who thought the bounty of fifteen shillings not adequate.

The Bill was ordered to be reported.

The house being in a Committee on the Bill for prohibiting the exportation of candles and soap.

Mr. *Rose* said it was advisable that the Bill should be limited to the period of four months. Parliament would then probably be sitting, and, if necessary, would continue the Bill; if it should be found that parliament would not sit so long, the Bill might be amended in time. He therefore brought up a clause to provide for such event, which was read, agreed to, and the house being resumed, the report was ordered to be received to-morrow.

The other Orders of the Day having been deferred, and the question of adjournment put,

Mr. *Lechmere* asked, when the report of the Select Committee would be brought forward relative to the New Affize of Bread?

Mr. *Wilberforce* in answer said, that it was now in the course of examination, and that subject would come forward in the next report of the Select Committee, on the high price of grain, and would soon be ready.—Adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

THURSDAY, *November 19.*

Heard counsel on Mr. Wakeman's Divorce Bill,

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THURSDAY, *November 19.*

Petitions from the Royal Exchange and London Insurance Offices were presented for leave to bring in a Bill for the better explanation of their charter, upon which some doubts had arisen, whether they were authorised to insure buildings not expressly specified in it. The petitions were referred to the consideration of a Private Committee.

CORN COMMITTEE.

Mr. *Ryder* brought up the Report of the Corn Committee, when Mr. *Huffey* gave notice, that he should reserve himself till the Bill came to be debated, as some information might intervene. The Bill was accordingly ordered upon the resolutions

tions of the Committee, and the *Chancellor of the Exchequer*, Mr. *Ryder*, and Mr. *Long*, desired to prepare and bring in the same.

PETITIONS FROM THE CITY OF LONDON.

The Sheriffs of London presented a petition from the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council of the said City, setting forth, "That the petitioners have observed with great concern, the attempts which have been made to disturb the public tranquillity by various seditious meetings which have been held in the neighbourhood of the metropolis, whose obvious tendency has been to inflame the minds of the people, and excite them to commit outrages, and to which meetings the petitioners attribute the late daring and atrocious attack upon the person of our most gracious sovereign; and therefore entreating the House to adopt such measures, for a limited time, as in their wisdom shall be deemed most expedient for suppressing all tumultuous and seditious meetings, and for the better security of his Majesty's person and government."

The Sheriffs of London also presented a petition, setting forth, "That an act was passed in the 3d year of the reign of King James the First, intituled, "An Act for the recovering of small debts, and for relieving the poor debtors in London," and an act was passed, in the 14th year of the reign of his late Majesty King George the Second, to explain and amend the said act; and that the said acts have been found defective, and it is expedient that the powers thereof should be explained and enlarged, and some further provisions established for the more easy and speedy recovery of small debts within the said city; and therefore praying, that leave may be given to bring in a Bill for the purposes aforesaid."

BILL FOR SECURING HIS MAJESTY'S PERSON, &c.

The Order of the Day, for the second reading of the Bill for the better securing his Majesty's person, &c. being read, and the question being put, "That this Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. *Fox* said he did not then mean to argue the principle of the present Bill. He rose for the purpose of saying, that he should enter into the subject when the question should be put, "That the Speaker do leave the chair," which, he understood, was likely to take place on Monday the 23rd. He took this course, he said, on account of the unavoidable absence of many Honourable Friends of his, and particularly of a learned and very able one, (Mr. *Erskine*). He begged it

to

to be understood, that his abstaining from debate that day was not to be construed into an approbation of the principle of the Bill, or into a dereliction of any one sentiment which he had uttered on former occasions on measures similar to the present; on the contrary, he retained all the objections which he had formerly urged, and he would deliver his sentiments on that subject on Monday the 23rd.

Mr. *William Smith* said, he had been unavoidably absent on the discussion of measures nearly connected with the Bill before the house. Not having an opportunity before to deliver his opinion, he thought it proper to say, that he felt himself compelled by every sentiment of duty to oppose the Bill. He opposed it on this ground, that it was one of those measures that would be ineffectual with regard to the objects professed to be attained, and likewise that it was one of those measures which have no tendency to maintain that tranquillity in the country which they profess to support. It was the custom with many to make declarations of their sentiments of attachment to the person of his Majesty. If he felt it necessary to make professions of that kind, he should follow their example, but it was a constitutional practice of the House, and therefore nothing to the contrary should be imputed to any gentleman who was a member of it, because he did not boast of his loyalty, to resist any attempts against his Majesty's person, crown, or dignity. Too many repetitions of that kind tended only to debar men from pursuing the true interests of either; and he confessed he thought that measures of coercion and of force against the expression of opinion, beyond what the law is, were inexpedient and unnecessary, especially at present. He thought that the law as it stood at present, was adequate to all the purposes for which the Bills were avowedly introduced; and that, if they should be attempted to be enforced, they would defeat the end which their promoters professed to have in view; for these reasons he would not enter into the subject more at large that night, but he could not suffer the Bill to pass in any stage of it without calling, as it appeared to him to be his duty, for the sense of the house.

The house divided,

Ayes
Noes

64
22

Majority

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

FRIDAY, *November 20.*

Their lordships affirmed the judgment of the Court in the Chandos Cause.

Read the Land and Malt Tax Bills a third time, and adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

FRIDAY, *November 20.*

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

A Message received from the Lords, intimating their lordships concurrence with the Land and Malt Tax Bills, and the Corn Bill, without any amendment.

SOAP AND CANDLES.

The Bill, prohibiting the Exportation of Soap and Candles for a time to be limited, was read a third time, and passed.

Fitzze, Bone, and Albrecht's Naturalization Bills were reported, and ordered to be engrossed.

A new writ was ordered for Westbury, in the room of Mr. Estwick, deceased.

PETITION AGAINST THE TWO BILLS.

Mr. *Honeywood* presented a petition from the Mayor, Recorder, Freeman, and Inhabitants of the City of Rochester, against the Bills pending in Parliament, "for the Security of his Majesty's Person and Government, and for the more effectual Prevention of Seditious Meetings and Assemblies."

A petition of the three under-signed, the Mayor, Recorder, Freeman, and Inhabitants of the City of Rochester, and parts adjacent, was presented to the house, and read; setting forth, "that, by sundry provisions in a Bill now before the house, intituled, "A Bill for the Safety of his Majesty's Person and Government against treasonable and seditious practices and attempts," the petitioners observe, with grief, that the ancient and wholesome statute of treasons of the 25th of Edward III. is altered, and new treasons enacted: That, whenever, by the bad administration of government, or their own imprudence, parliaments have been induced to depart from this plain and clear declaration of treasons, and to alter the general law respecting them, as there set forth; our forefathers have always returned to it, with increased conviction of

its certainty and sufficiency for the protection, as well of the person and prerogative of the King as of the liberties of the people; that, by other provisions of the said Bill, the crime of sedition is uncertainly defined, and a new and harsher punishment, in imitation of the severe and arbitrary Scots law, introduced for it: That, by the provisions in a Bill now also before the house, purporting to be "for the more effectually preventing seditious meetings and assemblies," the petitioners conceive a violent and dangerous attack is made on the undoubted right of the people to petition the King or Parliament for redress of their grievances, by subjecting the meetings necessary for the consideration of such grievances, and framing such petitions, to new and inconvenient regulations, guarded by severe penalties, and unknown to our ancestors and to the laws of the land; also by giving vague and discretionary powers to magistrates for the most part appointed by the crown, and removeable at its pleasure, to prevent any discussion at their will, to dissolve such meetings, and to imprison those who may be present there: That, in both the said Bills a latitude of expression is used in defining the acts constituting the crime of sedition, which may be made to include every notice of publick measures, other than approbationary, and is therefore utterly subversive of the freedom of the pen, of the press, and of speech: That, though the late detestable outrage against the Royal Person has been used as a pretence for these innovations, yet the petitioners cannot help observing, that the force of the laws does not appear to them to have been adequately resorted to, nor the civil power to have been duly exerted at the time, and that it is unfair to conclude from thence, that those powers, when properly exerted, are insufficient: That the petitioners are satisfied, from the experience of ages, and especially from that of the past century, during part of which a great and alarming disaffection pervaded all ranks of people, which extended not only to the King's government, but to his title and person, and excited two formidable rebellions in the heart of the realm; that the present laws, duly and vigorously administered, are fully adequate to the punishment of treason and sedition, as well as to the keeping of the peace, and the protection of his Majesty's person; and the petitioners declare their readiness, in their several capacities, to enforce them for those purposes to the utmost of their power: That the people of this country, being in general undoubtedly loyal to his Majesty, and well affected to the constitution, ought not, collectively,

actively, to suffer an abridgment of their right and liberties for the act, however atrocious, of a few desperate and obscure individuals: That the effect of these Bills will be to destroy all freedom of complaint against oppressions of laws or government, however well founded; to annihilate, in substance, the fifth article of the Declaration of Rights; and to create, in consequence, the most alarming discontents among his Majesty's subjects: The petitioners therefore intreat the house, as they wish to transmit to their posterity the unimpaired liberties of their ancestors, to preserve in the people their reverence for the constitution, and to merit their respect as faithful guardians of their rights, to resist all attempts, under whatever pretences, to abridge their liberties, and especially not to pass the said Bills.

Mr. *Honeywood* said, before he made the usual motion for laying the petition upon the table, he should trouble the house with a few words. It might, perhaps, appear extraordinary that he should present the present petition; the fact was, that he presented it at the particular request of the petitioners; not that they were not sensible of there being other members of much greater abilities than himself; but that they knew his sentiments coincided with those expressed in the petition. It was therefore with peculiar satisfaction that he had that day an opportunity of declaring those sentiments, and of expressing the great satisfaction with which he discharged the trust reposed in him. The petition which the house had just heard, was couched in terms of becoming respect. It had been procured by no artifice or manoeuvre, but was dictated by a genuine spirit of loyalty and independence. The persons by whom it was signed he well knew to be well affected to government, and to be particularly partial to the monarchical branch of the constitution. From local circumstances, the petitioners might be supposed to have an interest in supporting administration; they resided near Chatham, and there were many advantages which they derived from that circumstance in an honourable manner, but which might, in the contemplation of some, be supposed to give them a bias in favour of the measures of administration. Notwithstanding all considerations of interest, they had nevertheless fairly and firmly come forward like friends to their country, and apprehending danger from the Bill, had expressed their sentiments freely, and given it their most decided disapprobation. He confessed, he felt himself to be an incompetent advocate; but, thank God! the petition wanted no advocate. During a period of twenty

years that he had sat in parliament, he hoped he had done his duty; he had always acted according to the dictates of his conscience, and so he should continue to act. From a sense of his duty he was impelled to consider these Bills, not only as a flagrant outrage upon the rights of the people, but as a measure repugnant to every principle of justice. Where was the necessity, he would ask, of punishing the whole people of England for the crime or madness of a few individuals? Where was the policy of persevering in coercing and coercing? Mr. Honeywood said, administration should recollect, that there was no living thing so tame that would not turn again, if goaded to a certain point. The present policy, was, in his opinion, decidedly bad, and loaded the penal code with new and additional severities. A system of severity was ill calculated to quiet popular complaint. The petitioners, on the present occasion, were men who had been once most attached to the present minister, nay, he had ever thought them too much prejudiced in his favour. They were attached to him from the pledges which he had given in the early part of his political career; and they had in the commencement of his administration given them their decided support; but they had since seen all those pledges forgotten and abandoned. When the Right Hon. Gentleman first came into office, he had stood candidate for the county he represented, together with a noble lord now a member of the other house of parliament, and the electors had required, as a pledge of their future conduct, that they should declare that they would support the constitution by voting for the measures of the Right Hon. Gentleman; at that time they considered the minister as the friend of the people, a reformer of abuses, and an enemy to corruption. Could it therefore be matter of wonder that they had withdrawn that confidence, when they saw the system of measures which he pursued, and viewed these Bills by which the liberties of the people were to be annihilated? Was it surprising that their opinion should be changed when they saw the Right Hon. Gentlemen who had declaimed with such eloquence upon the abuses of the government, persist in maintaining them; when they saw him abandon every former profession, and relinquish that conduct which had gained him their attachment and support? The present laws were, he said, perfectly sufficient for securing the safety of the king and the constitution. If government, instead of enacting severe laws, which outraged the principles of the constitution and the feelings of the people, would redress their grievances, they would more conciliate that

that love. Mr. Honeywood concluded with saying, that from the character of the men who signed it, the petition had great weight, and he hoped it would be considered by the House with that attention which might induce them to reject the pernicious measures against which it remonstrated.

The petition was ordered to lie on table.

RETURNS OF LAND FORCES.

General Mulcock reminded the House, that on a former night, he had given notice, that, previous to the consideration of the army estimates, he would move for returns of all the military forces of the country which he conceived it highly necessary for gentlemen to be in possession of. For that purpose he then rose. He felt it to be his duty, and it was, he said, the duty of the House, before they voted away the money of their constituents, to enquire for what purpose the money was issued, how it was applied, the number of men that were paid, and the allowance granted to each. They had, besides, other duties to perform; not the least important of which was, to watch the conduct of ministers in their conduct of the war, to see that their means were equal to their plans, and that they were not busied in forming idle and extravagant projects beyond their power to execute. Another reason, therefore, which suggested the propriety of moving for the returns was, that the country might know the means employed for their protection, and the manner in which the levies had been conducted. That the House might also see how gallant and experienced officers, men of the highest merit, had been neglected, and the trust had been committed to officers, who were neither qualified, from their age or military skill, to discharge it with advantage to the country. On a future day, the general said, he would take occasion to call the attention of the House more particularly to these subjects. At present, he would simply move,

“ That there be laid before this house, returns of his Majesty's land forces, as they were effective, and paid in November, 1794, including artillery, cavalry, regular marching regiments, independent companies, fencible regiments, and companies of infantry and cavalry, and foreign emigrants, together with returns of all volunteer local corps, and corps of yeomanry; with an account of what pay, cloathing, and allowances they receive, and on what conditions; and also returns of the same, made up to the first day of August last.”

The *Secretary at War* said, to the first part of Hon. General's motion he had no objection. He was at all times ready and happy to give any information which it would be prudent to communicate to the House respecting the actual state of the public service. He had urged it, however, last year, when

similar returns were moved for, and he must urge it again, that it would be highly improper to make public the actual state of the public force up to the present time; because advantage might be taken of such information to the prejudice of the country. Understanding the chief object of the Hon. General's motion to be, to know the effects of a certain change that had lately taken place in the military arrangements of the kingdom, that object might be equally attained by returns made up to an earlier period. If the Hon. General therefore thought proper to make this motion accordingly, he should have no objection to it. With regard to the returns of the yeomanry, they had received no pay, no returns of these corps were made to the war office, consequently they could not be produced.

General Macleod replied, that the Secretary at War was perfectly correct in his statement of what passed between them. The circumstances of a change, by which the number of marching regiments was so much diminished as it had lately been, was highly worthy of enquiry. On this subject, however, he would not enter at present; and, in compliance with the wish of the honourable Secretary, he had no objection to substitute the word August for September in the last part of his motion. He was not surprised at the difficulties which would attend making the returns, for he could not see how the most expert Adjutant could make a general muster of a military body, composed of thirteen or fourteen different kinds of troops. With respect to the yeomanry, if they were not paid, they were at least furnished with arms, by government; so that the returns might be had at the Ordnance office, or at some other public office.

General Tarleton said, he was happy to find that the motion was not likely to be resisted, and thought that there must exist some mode by which government were acquainted with the numbers of the associated and yeomanry corps, and, if there was, they certainly could furnish the return in question.

General Smith said, he rather wished that France knew the exact returns of our troops, as it would shew the strong state of defence in which the country was, and he believed there never had been such a force in the country before. But, undoubtedly, there was no force without a return somewhere, and he wished the honourable gentleman would inform the house at what office the supplies of arms to the yeomanry were given.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said, that it was not customary, on the contrary, it was unusual to make returns of the

the yeomanry in his Majesty's land forces : they were always considered as a distinct and peculiar species of the military; nor could he discover the impropriety of following the old practice respecting them. With regard to the returns of the other forces, he was glad that they were called for; as they would afford the house an opportunity of seeing that nothing was neglected on the part of government. On the contrary, it would be evident, from the returns, that the executive government had been active and vigilant in their exertions for the security and peace of the country. The military strength and force of Great Britain never had been greater than at present; never, he was satisfied, had better military arrangements been made to maintain the constitution and laws. Such, he was happy to say, being the state of the army, there could be no reluctance on the part of the executive government to give every possible satisfaction on that head.

The motion was then modified agreeably to the conceptions made by the Secretary at War, and carried without a division.

General Macleod expressed his gratitude to the house for the honour they had done him, in acquiescing in his motion. He said he felt the greater satisfaction, as it was the first time that any accounts of importance had been moved which his Majesty's ministers did not refuse. Encouraged by his success, he would next move,

"That there be laid before this house a return of the general and staff officers, whether British or Foreign, who have been employed and paid under the Earl of Moira, with an account of their pay and allowances."

This being agreed to, he further moved,

"That there be laid before this house a return of all general and staff officers who have been employed in the service of his Majesty, and in his pay, under the Count D'Artois, Prince of Condé, or any other French General, with an account of their several allowances."

Which was likewise agreed to.

SUPPLY—ARMY ESTIMATES.

The house resolved itself into a committee of supply, to which the army estimates, and other papers, were, of course, ordered to be referred.

The *Secretary at War* said, that there was so little difference in the statement then to be made, and that usually produced every year, that there was little room for observation, but upon articles connected with the changes that had taken place

place in the mode of carrying on the war. The whole land force of the country was comprhended under two articles, that of guards and garrisons, and not of the colonies and plantations. Under the former was comprhended something more, and sometimes a little less, than its title seemed to indicate. It included the army on the continent, when there was any, and all the troops in Scotland, England, and Ireland, and those who served on shipboard, and was synonymous with our home army. The colonies and plantations contain all the troops not included under the former till, the troops in Gibraltar, Corsica, &c. He would state the numbers under each, and the increase or decrease, which had taken place since last year.

The amount of guards and garrison is decreased from the withdrawing the army from the continent, to 49,219. In the colonies there was an increase from 35,000 to 77868, owing to the augmentation of the army in the West Indies. Upon the whole, there was a reduction to the extent of 28,000 upon the establishment of regular troops.

The militia, fencibles, cavalry, and troops of every description, with the regular forces, amounted to 207,000. The West India staff was encreased, but he desired the Committee to recollect, that the medical staff was comprhended under it. The general result of the whole was, that the army, which was found to be equal to every purpose of defence, had been reduced by 25,000, and formed a saving to the public of 800,000l.

He recapitulated the several articles of the force to be voted as follows :

The militia amounted to	—	42,000
In the fencible infantry there had been a reduction of 1700 men.		
The whole amounted now to	—	13,000
The fencible cavalry had received an augmentation of 4000 men, and amounted to	—	10,000
The whole of the force, therefore, was as follows :	—	
Guards and-garrisons	—	49,219
Force in the colonies and plantations.	—	77,868
Militia	—	42,000
Irish brigade	—	4,414
The India army (which was paid by the Company)	—	10,000
The fencible infantry	—	13,000
The ——— cavalry	—	10,000
		206,501
Or taking it in round numbers		207,000

The

The other articles of importance was the West India staff, in which was included the medical staff.

The general result of the whole war, that the army to be kept on foot, in the ensuing year, was less than it had been last year by 25,369 men, the saving that accrued in consequence, was 817,091*l.* as would appear in the following statement,

For 49,219 land forces for 1796, 1,358,624*l.* 2*s.* 9*d.* for their charge and clothing.

1,666,900*l.* for maintaining the forces in the plantations, Gibraltar, Corsica, and New South Wales, from 25th of December 1795 to 25th December 1796.

40,195*l.* 4*gd.* for difference between the English and Irish establishments of six regiments of foot, from December 25, 1795, to December 25, 1796.

360,000*l.* for recruiting and contingencies for 1796.

120,000*l.* for innkeepers, for increased subsistence on quartering for 1796.

103,640*l.* 1*s.* 3*d.* for general and staff officers for 1796.

9,259*l.* 18*s.* 6*d.* for pay of general and staff officers on an expedition under General Clark, for 1796.

127,779*l.* 14*s.* 1*d.* for supernumerary officers and others, from December 25, 1795, to December 25, 1796.

143,490*l.* 13*s.* 5*d.* for Paymaster-general, Secretary at War, &c. for 1796.

118,973*l.* 18*s.* 6*d.* for reduced officers of land forces and marines, for 1796.

126*l.* 1*gd.* for reduced troops of horse guards, for 1796.

1000*l.* for officers late of the States-general for 1796.

52,500*l.* on a count of reduced officers of British American forces, for 1796.

7,500*l.* for allowance to ditto, for 1796.

917,294*l.* 14*s.* 1*d.* for militia and fencible infantry, for 1796.

710,000*l.* for contingencies for ditto, for 1796.

108,538*l.* 17*s.* 1*d.* for clothing militia for 1796.

476,636*l.* 10*s.* 8*d.* for fencible cavalry, for 1796.

115,000*l.* for certain allowances to ditto, for 1796.

375,483*l.* 14*s.* 1*d.* for ordnance for 1796.

279,400*l.* 4*d.* for ordnance service previous to the 31st of December 1793.

45,656*l.* 0*s.* 5*d.* for ditto in 1794.

61,000*l.* for ditto for sea service in 1794.

762,046*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.* for ditto for land service in 1795.

7,1000*l.* for civil establishment of Upper Canada for 1796.

5,415*l.* for ditto for Nova Scotia.

4,530*l.* for ditto for New Brunswick.

1,900*l.* ditto for St. John's Island.

1,8000*l.* for civil establishment for Cape Breton.

1,232*l.* 10*s.* for ditto for New foundland,

4,200*l.* for ditto of Bermuda Island, above present salaries.

580*l.* for Chief Justice of Bermudas,

600*l.* to

600*l.* for ditto of Dominica.

5,241*l.* for the civil establishment of New South Wales.

2,000,000*l.* to pay off Exchequer bills of last year.

1,500,000*l.* to pay off other Exchequer bills.

He concluded, that if any other information was required, he was ready to communicate it to the committee, and then moved his first resolution, viz. "that 207,000 men be employed for the service of the current year."

General Tarleton rose to observe, on the statement made by the Secretary at War. The General said, several of the articles appeared to him highly objectionable, and there was a considerable variation in others, from the statement given in the past year; upon the whole, the sum total of the estimates was much larger than might have been expected in the present circumstances of the war. He particularly objected to the whole statement of the fencible cavalry, and the expences of the corps, estimated at 480,000*l.* He declared he could not see the utility of so much cavalry within the kingdom, in addition to the regular troops, and the yeomanry cavalry. To the expence of the militia, which was much the same this year as the last, he had no objection to offer, that force being the natural and best defence of the country. The increased number and expence of general and staff officers was another matter that challenged observation. The estimate for the staff of Great Britain being laid at 103,000*l.* The charge for American reduced officers, he remarked, was as high this year as the last, though, to his knowledge, this body of men was considerably reduced. He wished, therefore for further explanation respecting these particulars, without which, he said he could not conscientiously vote away such large sums of his constituents money. He animadverted on the progressive increase of the land forces, and stated, that, from the year 1792 to the end of 1794, the increase of expence had accumulated, in the extraordinary ratio of, from one million to eleven. Considering this, and reflecting on the transactions of the two past years, he could not help enquiring what had been done proportionate to such a large addition of expence to the country? He declared he remembered when 800,000*l.* was considered as an immense sum for the army estimates, before the end of the next year, it had swelled to the enormous amount of 3,084,000*l.* If the country went on upon this plan of increasing expenditure, ruin must unavoidably be the consequence. With regard to the conduct and operations of the war in the West Indies and other places,

he should reserve his sentiments till a further opportunity ; as the house at present was not sufficiently crowded, nor had it sufficient abilities, to judge of the brilliant achievements which ministers had accomplished by these excessive armaments.

General Smith wished to call the attention of the Committee to the circumstance of the Irish brigade. The Committee ought, he said, to be informed of the expence attending that brigade from the commencement of its formation, and likewise the number of effective men in that corps. It was highly necessary, when voting a large sum of money, that the Committee should know in what manner it was applied. With respect to the sums stated on account of the army employed in the East Indies, which the Secretary at war had intimated, were made a charge upon the East India Company, and afterwards repaid by them ; it was to be observed, that the East India Company was not obliged to pay for a larger number of forces than they themselves required, and that the charges for that army were much more considerable this year than last. Another additional expence in the estimates for this year, compared with the last, was, in the article of granting to the soldiery certain proportions of bread and meat. The Secretary at War ought, in his opinion, to have stated that as an increase to the expences of the soldiers' pay. There was likewise an increased expence charged to the invalids.

Mr. Montagu said, he was one of those who had been instrumental in bringing forward the proposition of affording extra provisions for the soldiery. The innkeepers had, in several parts of the country, refused to serve the military with provision on market days, of which complaints had been made ; and to prevent any further inconvenience to the army, the allowance alluded to had been granted with a good effect.

Mr. M. Robinson made a few observations on the policy of the measure.

The *Secretary at War* deemed it unnecessary to state these items in the manner mentioned by the honourable General, because those expences had so lately come under the immediate cognizance of parliament. He reminded the house, that he had stated an estimate and not an account, and surely a large computation would be allowed to be better than a small one, as future embarrassments would be thereby avoided, while the surplus would be remitted to the public. With regard to the Irish brigade, he observed, that it was included in the article of the difference of pay to Irish regiments on the

British establishment. From the year 1772, Ireland had lent five regiments to this country, for which this country was debtor; but as Ireland, on the other hand, received troops from this country in lieu of those sent from thence; these troops might be the Irish brigade, or any other troops; as, in fact, however, they were the Irish brigade, on that account he did not mention them as a distinct charge; but whatever particular objections the honourable General might entertain to the formation of these troops, he could not, on that account, impeach the accuracy of the estimate which he had read. The additional subsistence money allowed to soldiers and innkeepers come under the cognizance of parliament.

General Smith admitted that in the manner the Irish Brigade had been included in the estimate, no expence was incurred: but still it was necessary to enquire into the raising and strength of that Brigade.

General Macleod complained of the conduct of Government with regard to the army in the West Indies: they had sent them out, he said, without a proper supply of medicines; the consequence of which, in that dreadful climate, was, that immense numbers of our brave troops had perished for want of proper assistance; and the mode they took of sending out a supply of medicines was the most extraordinary ever heard of. They sent them out in a single ship, which that monster Victor Hugues laid wait for, with three small privateers, and captured; though at that time we had six and twenty men of war and fourteen sloops in those seas. From the dreadful consequences that had happened in that respect, owing entirely to the neglect of ministers, he hoped that they had of late been particularly cautious in sending out every possible medical assistance, not only for the army going out, but for those few troops that still remained languishing there. In speaking of the expedition going out to the West Indies, the General declared, he was sorry to say, that accounts had been received relative to that armament, that rendered it doubtful whether they would want any medical aid. He had heard the late storm had made dreadful havock with the fleet. He would say no more upon a subject so shocking to the feelings, except to express an anxious hope that the accounts were exaggerated. Should, however, any of the ships be driven on shore on our coast, he trusted that every assistance would be given them. If unfortunately they should be driven on the French coast, he hoped his Majesty's ministers would endeavour to enter into some negotiation with the French, in order that they might be treated with all possible kindness.

The

The *Secretary at War* said, it was impossible for him to know what medical staff the Hon. General would consider a sufficient one; he was happy however to be able to state, (having consulted those who were the most likely to be the best informed upon this subject), that the medical staff, and the supplies of medicines of all kinds sent out with this expedition, were, in the estimation of those to whom he had alluded, rather greater than was absolutely necessary; he was sure the Committee would not wish to spare expence for the purpose of preserving the health of our troops in a climate so hostile to European constitutions. With respect to the want of medicines in the West Indies, the Hon. General, at the moment that he reprobated it, had himself assigned the cause for it, viz. the capture of the ship in which the medicines were embarked; that circumstance was, in itself, a proof that government took every means in their power to supply them. The Hon. General had complained that these supplies were sent out in a single ship. In that very observation he had again answered himself; he acknowledged we had a large naval force in those seas; and therefore it could not be pretended, that it was the fault of government, that the enemy were able to take a single ship with so small a force. As soon as it was known that the ship had been captured, government lost no time in sending out, in the first ship that went, all the medicines that could be collected at so short a notice.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer*, regretted the misfortune which occurred to the vessel that had sailed for the West Indies, freighted with medicinal stores; but as soon as the accident was known here, he assured the Committee that the utmost exertions were used in every department to repair the calamity, by sending out large quantities of medicines in all the first ships which sailed to that quarter. Considering the extent of the present expedition, for its magnitude unparalleled in the history of this country, and the variety of complex measures to be necessarily adopted, it was impossible that the equipment could have been made with such dispatch, without the most unremitting diligence have been exerted in every department of government. The commander in chief of that expedition, to every one acquainted with his character, must be known to be most materially interested in the state of the force he was to direct; and in his last letter he mentioned that "no expence or pains had been spared for the necessary accommodation of the men, either in sickness or in health."

With respect to the particular subject under consideration, he was happy to have it in his power to make two communica-

cations to the House. First, that the last expresses received from the commandant of the reinforcements sent to St. Domingo, stated that the forces had safely arrived with the loss of only one man upon the voyage. Secondly, That an express had that morning been received from the commandant of the last reinforcements sent to the Leeward Islands, stating that the troops had also arrived at their places of destination without the loss of a single man.

Mr. *M. Robinson* said, that it would require a wary eye to see that there was no neglect in any part of the public service that related to the military force of the kingdom.

Mr. *Alderman Lushington* declared he believed that due attention had been paid by government to the military sent to the West Indies, because from his correspondence with Sir Ralph Abercrombie, he was enabled, on the authority of that officer, to state that the troops under his command had every accommodation that could possibly be desired.*

General Smith was happy to hear of the safe arrival of our troops in the West Indies; he wished however to ask the Hon. Gentleman, whether, in the letter he had seen from Sir Ralph Abercrombie, that officer had expressed himself satisfied that every possible dispatch had been made in getting that expedition out?

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that Sir Ralph Abercrombie, not having giving his opinion upon that point in the letter he had seen, he could not pretend to state that fact upon the General's authority from his own knowledge; he could assure the Committee, however, that the most unremitting exertions were used in forwarding it, and when the very extensive scale upon which the expedition was planned, a scale extensive beyond all comparison with any attempted on any former occasion, and the great number of arrangements necessary to be made, were considered, it would not, he believed, be imagined that the preparations had taken up a greater length of time than was indispensibly necessary.

General Tarleton asked, whether the Hon. Alderman would not have felt his mind more easy if the expedition had failed six weeks ago.

General Fitzpatrick said, he could not but lament some unfortunate circumstances which had taken place in the course of the last summer, and particularly the mutinies that had broken out in some regiments on account of their being drafted into other corps. He understood from the public prints, and though he had no higher authority for the information, he believed they were pretty correct in that particular, it had so often

often happened both here and in Ireland as to be considered almost a matter of course, and that government naturally expected it to occur, that if a regiment was raised upon certain conditions, those conditions, at all events, ought to be kept. He read a letter, from Colonel Hay, which positively stated, that the stipulations made with his regiment had been broken; that this had been represented to ministry, and yet no satisfaction had been given; but on the contrary. His own opinion, the General said, clearly and decidedly was, it had been treated by ministers with contempt.

The *Secretary at War* said it was impossible for government to be responsible for all the engagements entered into by the different persons that were frequently concerned in the recruiting service. Government acted in general conformably to ancient military usage, and never violated any stipulation which it had itself entered into. With regard to Colonel Hay's letter, he had reason to think the circumstances were not precisely such as that officer stated them to be.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* assured the Committee, that it was a rule laid down by the several departments, in concert with the commander in chief, and invariably observed that whatever might be the exigency of service, no question of expediency should induce them to a breach of faith or a departure from the conditions upon which men were levied by the authority of government, and he had no reason to think that this rule was on any occasion dispensed with.

Mr. Grey said, facts were stubborn things, and appearances were strongly against the Right Hon. Gentleman's assertion. He held in his hand the letter of Colonel Hay, which he produced, and read an extract, stating, that, in violation of the faith held out to him that they should not be drafted, an order had been sent from the war office to draft them into other regiments at the moment they were embarking for foreign service. Mr. Grey called upon for administration to answer the fact which he had read.

General McLeod wished also for an explanation of another fact, generally believed respecting Colonel Beaumont's regiment of cavalry, the horses for which were provided at the expence of 25*l.* each. The regiment was afterwards dismounted, sent abroad, and the horses sold again for 8*l.* per horse. If the fact were founded, it was, he said, a scandalous and shameful waste of the money of the public.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that, it was impossible for him to be prepared to answer every story that different gentlemen might have heard and chose to relate. That Colonel

nel Beaumont's regiment of cavalry was raised, dismounted, and sent on foreign service, was undoubtedly true; with regard to the sale of the horses, all that he could say was, that he should inquire into it.

Mr. *Jenkinson* thought it not in the least difficult to account for the loss which occurred in the sale of the horses. The exigencies of the service required that several regiments should be dismounted; and when the horses were obliged to be put up to auction, every gentleman must be aware they often sold at considerable loss.

Mr. *Rolle* said some alteration was absolutely necessary in the Mutiny act, in order to correct the unfair conduct of some of the inn-keepers and publicans. He stated a fact that happened at Gloucester, where notwithstanding the allowance made to them last year by parliament, an inn-keeper took advantage of a regiment marching in on a market day to refuse them the necessary accommodations. This was likely to produce great discontent amongst the military, who, on such occasions, might not be so provided as to be able to supply themselves.

Mr. *Lechmere*, in some degree, justified this conduct, by stating, that he was, at the time alluded to, at Gloucester; and that the inn-keeper where he put up had seven soldiers suddenly quartered upon him, in addition to 14 others of the Cinque Port soldiers then in town. So far from the inn-keepers deserving censure, Mr. *Lechmere* thought they were more entitled to the compassionate consideration of the House.

The *Secretary at War* then proceeded to move his resolutions founded on his former statements.

When the chairman read that which related to expences incurred by the extensive establishment of General and Staff Officers,

Colonel Maitland rose, and animadverted on the prodigality of ministers in this department of the military establishment, declaring that it would be necessary for him to move for the returns. Sir *Charles Grey*, during his distinguished services in the West Indies, had not, he said, more than five Generals under his command; but, by the present resolution, the public were called upon to provide for one thousand field and staff officers. There were 30 generals and field marshals, 62 lieutenant generals, 200 colonels, and 700 majors.

When they came to the resolution of voting 480,000*l.* for the maintenance of 10,000 fencible cavalry for the ensuing year,

Gen. A. Leod desired to know, whether ministers could possibly assign any plausible reason for maintaining so great an army of fencible

fencible cavalry. They could be advantageously applicable only to two purposes ; to defend the kingdom from foreign invasion, or to maintain its internal tranquillity. The country was at present effectually secured from the first by the superiority of our navy ; and as to the second, it could not be necessary, except to support the machiavelian policy of the minister. Of what use he asked, could so many fencible cavalry be, except to compel the people to give up their rights and liberties, and for the purpose of patronage ? It was the practice of ministers to encrease the forces in large and small bodies, of one, two, and three troops, to the desire and disposition of those they wished to bribe, as a taylor would fit a suite of clothes to the choice of his customer, although they had not the smallest apprehension of any occasion for them.

General Tarleton asked if it was intended to make any reduction of this body of troops ?

The *Secretary at War*, said, not at present that he knew of ; he might as well have asked, of what use are any troops at all ? " They were of double use, he said, because they might be employed against the attacks of a foreign enemy, and, I am sorry to say, continued he, there has been occasion for them, and if the opinions of certain gentlemen be followed, they were likely to have a great deal more occasion for them."---He observed also, that they might be raised with greater facility than other troops, because they were not to go out of the country.

General Tarleton said, the question was worthy of a motion in itself, because almost half a million of money was therein involved. Since the cavalry lent to the Elector of Hanover was upon its return to this country, he thought the fencible cavalry might at least be diminished, for he had seen them, and they did not meet his approbation.

General Smith declared he had thought them necessary, at a former period, and he did not doubt their exertions in case of an invasion, the occasion for them however no longer existing, though he had not made up his mind to disband them, he conceived that they should be reduced.

General Macleod arose again and said, since our fleets had been so triumphant, the idea of a foreign invasion never entered the mind even of an old woman, and therefore he conceived them no farther necessary, than to support the wickedness of the minister's measures against the resistance of the people. He cautioned ministers, however, lest they finally drove the people to actual insurrection and rebellion, for although it was an axiom in their machiavelian policy, that " a suppressed rebellion strengthens the hands of the existing government." yet
from

from the examples of this country it was evident that such policy was not to be used with our dispositions. He believed, however, that ministers wished for a rebellion, to remain in power. Let us look to James II. the worst of our kings, and we should find that in less than twelve months after the suppressed rebellion, in which the Duke of Monmouth was implicated, he was obliged to abdicate the throne. The people, he said, might by and by convince ministers that they had gone too far, and that such despotic objects could only be attained by wading through torrents of British blood. He had no idea, however, of a British army fighting against a British people, and since our regular cavalry was come or was coming from Germany, he did not see the necessity of keeping up two bodies of this sort of troops, when one would be fully sufficient, he should therefore take the sense of the House upon it.

Lord John Russell said, an extraordinary instance of the manner in which government had used the power of the corps of fencible cavalry came within his knowledge, and he would state it to the Committee. In a town in his neighbourhood several magistrates, were sitting with him upon public business; they were, on a sudden, surrounded by a troop of fencibles; the court, and the inhabitants of the town, were struck with consternation, and asked the reason of this military array; they were told the military came there to quell a riot, and that they had 12 rounds of cartridge and ball.—There had been no riot there, nor any disposition towards a riot; and he wished to know upon what authority government had thus unnecessarily overawed the peaceable inhabitants of the town to which he alluded?

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that government had never given orders for the attendance of the military, except upon information that justified it. He thought, when the noble lord had ushered in his account with all the pomp of military parade, and had proceeded to talk of 12 rounds of cartridges and ball, he was to give an account that some of them had been fired. But it seemed that no harm was done; no riot happened:—the appearance, perhaps, of the military prevented it: the noble lord had not named the town.

Lord John Russell said it was the town of Odiham.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* then observed that as the subject of the fencibles had been objected to, he thought it right to apprise the Committee that it was the opinion of government, that all the regular cavalry of last year, with what is to come from abroad, together with the fencibles, was no more than was sufficient for placing the country on a respectable

table footing with regard to its foreign enemies, and to answer for all the causes which do exist, or may exist, for its internal tranquillity.

Mr. Courtenay, after supporting Lord John Russell, and contending for the propriety of bringing the matter forward, observed, that as the cavalry were returning from Germany, there must be some extraordinary provision for having so large a body of other troops in the heart of the kingdom. Were they to have as many cavalry as they had when they were threatened with an invasion, together with a vast number from the continent? They had no dread now of an invasion. The ministers said they were answerable for all causes which were, or which might be, for the tranquillity of the kingdom. There was sufficient reason for having all this military force—It was to support two Bills that are now depending in parliament, authorizing magistrates to act with military execution on the people. It was to support the reading of the Riot act, to those who should attempt to debate or speak on any political question. To authorize the magistrate to fire on the people, if any thing be said contrary to the opinion of that magistrate. One of the Bills stated, "That if, by accident, any persons assembled shall happen to be killed, maimed, or hurt in the dispersing, seizing, or apprehending, or endeavouring to disperse, seize, or apprehend them, that then every such justice of the peace, &c. and all, and singular other persons who shall be aiding and assisting them, shall be free, discharged, and indemnified, &c." That was the Bill, and a magistrate might say, he heard something said against the minister, and therefore he thought it seditious. He would say, again, that, to support these Bills, the cavalry were meant to perform military execution on the people.

Question! question! question! was loudly called.

General Smith rebuked this calling for the question, and then made some observations to caution the Committee upon the extent of the proposed vote.

The Committee divided,

<i>Ayes</i>	62
<i>Noes</i>	14

Majority - 48

The several other resolutions were then put and carried, and the House being resumed, the report was ordered to be received on Monday, to which day a further Committee of Supply and of Ways and Means was deferred.

General *Fitzpatrick* moved, That there be laid before the house a copy of the Letter of Service for raising the 100th or Aberdeenshire regiment, commanded by Colonel Hay.—Ordered.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

MONDAY, *November 23.*

The following Bills were brought up from the Commons and read a first time.

An Act to prevent, for a limited time, the making of starch and hair-powder from wheat; and to permit, for a limited time, the importation of starch and hair powder duty free.

An Act to prevent, for a limited time, the exportation of candles, tallow and soap.

And two Naturalization Bills.

COMMISSION.

The royal assent was given, by commission, to the land and malt bills; the Act for continuing the duty on mum, perry, and cyder; an Act for preventing, for a limited time, the exportation of wheat, flour, and potatoes, and for permitting the importation of corn, flour, and other articles of food, duty free; and an Act permitting the importation of thrown silk, flax, and flax-seed, duty free.

The commissioners were the *Lord Chancellor*, the *Duke of Portland*, and the *Earl of Westmorland*.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

MONDAY, *November 23.*

Freeze's and Bone's Naturalization Bills were read a third time and passed.

PETITIONS.

The following petitions were presented:

Sir W. Heathcote presented a petition from the inhabitants of the town of Gosport, complaining of the outrage against his Majesty, and praying that measures may be taken to prevent seditious meetings.

Sir John Ross presented a similar petition from the county of Suffolk.

Mr.

Mr. *Fox* desired to know whether that county meeting was convened under any notification that such Bills as those now before the house were to be taken into consideration?

Sir *J. Ross* stated, that the meeting was convened by public advertisement, (which he read) and that the sheriff, by whom the meeting was convened, had given public notice of the Bills now before parliament. He asserted that the meeting was so unanimous, that there was only one dissenting voice; and that it was his firm opinion that the petition just presented spoke the sense of ninety-nine out of one hundred of the county of Suffolk.

Colonel *Stanley* presented a similar petition from the town and neighbourhood of Manchester and Salford; and stated that seven thousand three hundred and fifty-four names were subscribed to it in the course of one day and a half.

Mr. *Annesley* presented a petition from the fullest meeting ever known of the inhabitants of Reading, in Berkshire against the two Bills now pending in parliament; one entitled "A Bill for the Safety and Preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government against Treasonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts," and the other "A Bill for more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies," and praying that measures might be taken by that house for entering into a negotiation with France, for the purpose of terminating the war, under whatever form of government that country may exist.

Ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. *Honeywood* presented a similar petition from the citizens and freemen of the ancient city of Canterbury. Before he moved for it to lie on the table, he begged leave to say a few words, not only upon the subject of the petition itself, but the manner in which it had been obtained. A meeting of the citizens and freemen of Canterbury had, he said, upon requisition, been regularly called by a magistrate; and those who attended, as the subscription shewed, were, in point of number and character, as large, respectable, and unanimous as ever were before assembled within the walls of that city. The petition was afterwards left in the town-hall for the reception of signatures, the greater part of which were known to be subscribed by persons of the utmost consequence and character. The chairman of the meeting received the public thanks of those who attended it for his fair, manly, and impartial conduct; and the whole meeting assembled and dispersed with such order and decorum as reflected on them the highest honour and credit. In respect to the political prin-

ciples of the petitioners it was well known that the city of Canterbury had uniformly been remarkable for its loyalty to the crown, and the partiality of the inhabitants towards the present minister had been no less notorious. This Mr. Honeywood said he had no need to dwell upon, as the speaker was a witness when they presented the minister with the freedom of their city, and had an opportunity of observing the joy which diffused itself on every countenance, and that all the different orders of the people strained every nerve to express their estimation of his talents and character.

With the same zeal and ardour had they manifested their partiality and attachment to the constitution; at the time when associations were entered into throughout the kingdom for its defence against a foreign invasion, no men came forward with more eagerness or more enthusiasm. The inhabitants of Canterbury formed a volunteer corps with almost unexampled expedition, and professed themselves ready and willing to die in support of the constitution, they so much venerated and esteemed. He differed with them at the moment upon the principle of such associations, because he thought the alarm raised throughout the kingdom had been excited merely for political purposes; he must, notwithstanding, do them the justice to give them ample credit for their loyalty, their attention to the laws, their order and discipline, and, above all, for their regard to the peace of their country. Differing with them, however as he did, because had the danger been so great as it was pretended to be, he could neither see the propriety nor the necessity of supporting the constitution by strengthening the military power from a conviction that the people themselves would never tamely submit to a foreign enemy; and that we had besides our strongest and most experienced bulwark to defend us, the wooden walls of old England. He felt that conviction to be well founded at the time, and it had since been confirmed by the fact, that many of those who formerly differed from him had since altered their opinions. Various reasons had induced him to object to the corps of cavalry which had been raised in Canterbury. Many of the persons who formed that corps neglected their occupations; and at the particular period, when we suffered under the miserable effects of a famine, the consequences were the more distressing. He wished to see the broad-sword again converted into a plough-share, and agriculture diligently and industriously encouraged; his opinion was, that such always ought to be the object, unless an actual necessity

necessity could be proved that it ought to be abandoned for a state of warfare.

Canterbury, he said, had of late had more the appearance of a garrisoned or besieged town than a free city in a great commercial country, and consequently peculiar hardships attendant on military operations had been endured by its inhabitants. The camps in the neighbourhood had been a further and considerable inconvenience, because notwithstanding the good order and discipline, most scrupulously exacted, some petty depredations and misdemeanours would inevitably happen in the vicinity of any large body of soldiery. In proportion as the oppressions and calamities of the people increased, pains and penalties increased in the same ratio; and, at this time, when the only privilege remaining was to complain, the people were to be deprived even of that mode of relief, and their mouths were to be stopped; they must therefore endure in silence. Such an increase of pains and penalties merely because a few individuals in a moment of enthusiastic folly, perhaps of desperation and madness, had been guilty of an outrage, for the punishment of which the existing laws were fully sufficient, Mr. Honeywood thought most unjustifiable.

Another inconvenience to which the people were subjected was, he observed, keeping so large a military force in the kingdom, the perpetual marching and counter-marching of troops kept the whole country in a state of alarm and confusion; no sooner was the rout of a detachment of soldiers made known, than a party of constables were sent before to press the waggons of the farmers into the service for the conveyance of stores and baggage. It was, he said, from the nature of the case that those waggons were frequently and repeatedly pressed at the very same time they should have been employed to carry off the scanty crops which the harvest produced. The consequence often was, that a wet day ensued; the corn was obliged to remain upon the field, where it was materially damaged; this incidentally tended to promote the general scarcity; and thus that scarcity became more increased and severe. Had these instances happened only once, or twice, or thrice, he should not have thought them worth mentioning; but they had happened so often, that he hoped the War-office would take notice, and endeavour to prevent their repetition in future. To these grievances, among a variety of others, the people had cheerfully submitted; was it therefore in reason or justice, that because they have hitherto suffered patiently, fresh grievances were to be

be imposed on them, and when they begin to admit that they feel the calamities occasioned by the war, they are to have their tongues tied, and to be deprived of those inestimable liberties on which the constitution depends. Ministers might stop the mouths of the people, but could they prevent their thoughts? Their minds could not be deprived of reflection, however capable their actions might be of receiving shackles. The people could not be insensible of feeling; and although they might suffer their ill humour to gather and collect in silence for a time, it would ultimately break out, and what emotion might follow no man could guess, much less decide. The people have hitherto not only shown great and rooted regard for the constitution, but unprecedented loyalty and attachment to the office and person of his Majesty. Let ministers beware then how they act, lest they not only provoke the resentment of the people against their own desperate measures, but weaken the security of the throne itself. His Majesty, Mr. Honeywood said, was protected by the love lodged in the hearts of his subjects, and not by the multiplied pains and penalties of rigorous statutes, or the number of the military forces drawn round him. The only men his Majesty could look up to, and depend upon for their loyalty and truth, were those who know how much his safety depends on the established law and constitution of the country; those who do not content themselves by manifesting their loyalty by empty professions, but who evince attachment and bring their zeal to the test of unanswerable proof, whenever occasion calls for action; those who, while they respect his Majesty's person, forget not for a moment their respect for those liberties which prompt a vigour and stimulate a desire to defend him at all hazards. They had seen the table covered with petitions complaining of the corrupt influence of the crown, which by being disregarded, he feared had too justly afforded the people reason to conclude that parliament did not attend to their real interests; if it had so attended, he was sure there would not only have been no war at this time, but there would have been no war commenced against France. Peace, he insisted, was the only remedy for dissensions, if dissensions did exist, he hoped and trusted, therefore, that men who meant and acted upon such laudable principles as the freemen and citizens of Canterbury would be attended to. Mr. Honeywood concluded with moving that the petition lie on the table—Ordered.

Lord Swinstead presented a petition from the inhabitants of Bristol, praying that the Bills might not pass into a law.

Mr.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, that observing a reluctance in his lordship to mention the contents of the petition, he would ask him how many names were signed to it, and of what description of people the subscribers were? This question he judged necessary, as he had been informed, by good authority, that they were of the most respectable class, and consisted of 4000.

Lord Sheffield replied, that he did not think it necessary, as he had not learnt from the chair, that it was necessary to mention the number and quality of the persons who had signed the petition, nor could he pretend to answer the question with any degree of accuracy. He, however, thought it probable that the number might amount to 4000; who, for ought he knew, were respectable people.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, he feared the petition had got into bad hands, nor was he singular in this opinion, as he had received a letter from Bristol, stating, that several of the petitioners felt the same apprehensions. So unanimous were the framers of the petition, that they thought it necessary to present it to that house as the sense of the inhabitants of Bristol, which circumstance the noble lord appeared anxious to conceal, and willing to insinuate that the signatures were not those of respectable persons.

Lord Sheffield said, that the honourable gentleman should not put an untruth into his mouth. He did not say that the persons who had signed the petition were not respectable; but since he found himself called upon, he must say, that he did not know that the petition spoke the general sense of the people of Bristol, he rather believed it did not, because it neither came from the corporation, nor from those persons who were in the habit of addressing parliament.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, he did not mean to question the veracity of the noble lord, but he would repeat, that he had the best authority for asserting that the persons whose names were to the petition were of the most respectable class, and that it was intended to convey the sentiments of the inhabitants of Bristol.

Lord Sheffield repeated his former opinion, and added, that he did not know the subscribers, and that it was probable many of them had signed the petition who had never read it.

The petition was ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. *Grey* presented a petition from the inhabitants of the town and county of Southampton, against the Bills, which was ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. *Fox* presented a similar one from the inhabitants of Norwich, signed by many thousands of respectable persons.

That

That they were persons, of that description he declared, he was well assured; and the fact, he trusted, would not be doubted even by the member for that city, (Mr. Windham), now one of his Majesty's ministers; the names of many of whose friends were to be found among the number. Ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. *Sheridan* presented a petition against the Bills from several inhabitants of the city of Chester. He stated, that unfair advantages had been taken, in many instances, of the irritation of the loyal mind of the English nation, occasioned by the outrage offered to the person of their Sovereign. An address had been presented to his Majesty from the City of Chester, congratulating his Majesty on his escape from assassination, and praying that he would take measures to prevent the repetition of similar outrages. He said, he did not fear to assert that wherever the Bills before the house were known, they were disliked; and that the general opinion of the country had never expressed more decided abhorrence and detestation against any measures than against them. He had received a letter from a gentleman in Chester, who informed him that many of the persons who had signed the Address to the King, did not know that it went any farther than to congratulate him on his safety.

Lord *Belgrave* said, he had had the honour of presenting the Address to his Majesty from the most respectable part of the City of Chester. He had lately received a letter, which stated, that the jacobins of that place were hard at work, and the writer feared they would be too successful: that their petition was signed by school-boys, apprentices, and many tradesmen of the lower orders, among whom were several dissenters; and that when they wanted to make any person sign their petition, they asked him whether he had any objection to a peacc? From these circumstances he did not think it probable that the petition presented by the honourable gentleman, was of the most respectable kind.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, he did not wish that the school-boys should be taken from learning their Greek to sign petitions. If the persons who had signed that which he now presented, were of the lower classes of the community, he must say, that they appeared to know the constitution better than their superiors, who had signed the address to his Majesty. The latter had tacked to their congratulations a request, that his Majesty would be pleased to take measures for preventing future outrages; and if this had any view to either of the Bills now pending, it was highly unconstitutional, for the
King

King could not take any measure without the consent of Parliament. The petition was ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. Sheridan presented a petition from Sheffield, signed by 8000 persons against the Bills.

LONDON CORRESPONDING SOCIETY.

Mr *Sturt* presented a petition against the Bills signed by 12,113 persons. Many of them, he said, were respectable tradesmen; and the rest were mechanics, artisans, and labourers, and a no less useful and valuable part of the community. These people in part constituted the London Corresponding Society, which a noble Lord (Morington) whom he did not then see in his place, had, on a former evening, connected with the persons who committed the outrage on his Majesty, but which connection he doubted not to disprove. The noble lord had said, that he had bought a book entitled *king-killing* at a shop, which recommended regicide; and that the book was printed and published by the avowed printer and publisher for that society; and hence he deduced his conclusion, that that society and the perpetrators of the outrage on his Majesty on the first day of the session were connected. Unaccustomed as he was to public speaking, Mr. Sturt said, it was not likely that he should have it imputed to him, that he misrepresented the assertions of the noble Lord, because he had taken his words down. The noble lord having endeavoured to prove the connection, by asserting that Citizen Lee was Printer to the society, he should endeavour to disprove the connection, by asserting that Citizen Lee was *not* Printer to the society; and he was able to do so from his own enquiries of the mother of that man, and of the man himself, who had both positively denied the fact. He had made these enquiries; first, in consequence of some doubts which he himself entertained on the subject; and secondly, to gain such information respecting it as his parliamentary duty required. He said, he went to the mother of Citizen Lee, who lives in a court in St. Anne's-street, and who informed him, that her son did once belong to the London Corresponding Society, but that he was no longer a member of it, having been twice turned out; and this was afterwards confirmed by Citizen Lee, who assured him of the same fact, nor was he ever employed by Thelwall, or connected with him directly or indirectly. Thelwall always printed his own speeches on his own account, put his name to them, and published them himself. Mr. Sturt hoped that this would do away the odious impression which the house had received of the intentions of the London Corresponding

ponding Society, as connected with the book which Citizen Lee had published; a book which he considered too disgraceful to bring before that house. Excepting the title of the book, there was nothing in it; at least, worthy the notice of that house; and the man had declared to him, that he merely put the title of *King-killing* to it with a view to excite a sale for it. The paragraph on tyrannicide, he said, was copied from a paper called the Cabinet, which was published by a society of gentlemen twelve months ago, and other parts of it were of a more distant date.

To show how absurd, how mean, contemptible, and insignificant the publication was, and how little worth the notice of the house, Mr. Sturt quoted a few words with the explanations annexed to them, as the noble lord had done upon a former evening. These were, "BRASS! i. e. *Dundas*."—CONSEQUENCE! *Pitt, full dressed, surrounded by his myrmidons of the Treasury*."—"PENSIONS: *Sinecures which a minister receives for himself and his relations, of 4000*l.* a year, and yet not satisfied*." How could any person, he asked, for a moment imagine that such ridiculous and stupid paragraphs were treason? And why should it be concluded that a large body of people were concerned in the sale of such miserable trash? Many of the persons so implicated, were as good friends to the constitution as the noble lord who brought that charge against them; and he would undertake to assert, that there was not one incendiary at the meeting at Copenhagen-house. He would go further, he would take upon him to assert, that they were better friends to the constitution than many persons high in power and authority, particularly a certain *Mufti*, who had the audacity to declare, that, "The mass of the people in every country had nothing to do with the laws but to obey them." "These people, said Mr. Sturt, are friends to a parliamentary reform; and they apprehend that if the parliament does not accomplish that reform, a revolution will effect it; and so do I, nay, I will go farther, perhaps I think a revolution better of the two." At any rate, he declared, he could not but think them better friends to the constitution than the right honourable gentleman opposite; for that right honourable gentleman had deserted the cause which he professed to support, whereas they continued to maintain it still. The right honourable gentleman had formerly agitated the question of parliamentary reform, and got into power by appearing to be its most zealous advocate.

Had not, he asked, the people a reasonable or rather an ample ground for complaint, that the public money was lavished with a wanton extravagance; if a brave officer, a poor foldier

soldier, or sailor, after spending a long life, and losing a limb or two in the service of his country, received no more than 5l. a year for subsistence, while others by duplicity and deceit, obtained large pensions for doing little more than conspiring against the liberties of their country? A pension of that trifling size had, he asserted, been recently given to a man, whose writings set the world in a flame, and who had reviled and calumniated the people of England, and yet this man's hypocrisy and apostacy was rewarded with no less than a pension of 4000l. a year. In his, and matters like this, the people complained of, and were justified in describing and discussing them as grievances. The declaration of the noble lord, upon the proceedings at Copenhagen-house had, he observed, gained more support than he expected. fortunately those declarations could deprive no man who attended that meeting of his life, and if ever the case should come before a British jury, all treasonable and seditious intentions on the part of that meeting would, he doubted not, be completely negatived. As a proof of the purity of the intentions of the society, he would beg leave to read to the house an extract from the speech delivered there by Mr. Thelwall, which was as follows.

"Thus convinced, and thus feeling for the miseries of my fellow-beings, perceiving, as I think I do, the political sources of these calamities, and convinced of the necessity of speedy and effectual redress; believe me, I do not mean to damp the ardour with which you pursue that object; but I will tell you, according to my judgment, what is the line of conduct by which we may obtain it. It is not by tumult. It is not by violence. It is by reason, by turning our serious attention to facts and principles, by bold and determinate investigation, not to be checked by idle threats, nor turned aside by actual danger. It is by the resolution to proceed like enlightened, bold, and peaceable citizens, determined to respect, in our own conduct, the sacred laws of humanity and good order, but rather to die than to suffer the turbulence, injustice, and persecuting fury of others, to drive us from those principles of liberty and justice which the force of conviction has incorporated with our existence, principles upon which the happiness, nay, the bread, of our children, and our children's children, through all successive generations, may depend.

"Citizens! these are objects too grand and important to be accomplished by the headlong projects of tumultuary violence. What advantage can you receive from pulling down a chimney house? The consequence will only be, that chimneys will accumulate their vile art of man-stealing with more cunning and secrecy, and consequently with more success, than they do at

present. What advantage can result from pulling down a mill, or wasting and destroying by wholesale, the necessaries of life? The consequence is this, you increase the evil, instead of removing it; you destroy the means of your own subsistence; you suspend industry; and you injure the cause of liberty, by the pretence you furnish to the supporters of corruption and oppression, to represent you as a parcel of ignorant plunderers, and thus give them a colour for exercising still worse despotism than ever.

"Citizens! it is not a crimp, it is not a baker, a miller, or a maltster, no, nor even a few despicable and avaricious monopolizers and forestallers; those are not the authors of your sufferings; for beings of this description could not live but for the corrupt system you have the misfortune to have established over you. And therefore, it is the system you must reform, not wreak your revenge upon individuals. Revenge and personal chastisement are not only cruel, but they are fallacious and inadequate means of reform. If you destroy one set of villains, another set will arise in their place, whom the corruption of the system will quickly make as villainous as the former. But if you procure that weight and balance which you ought to have in the representation and legislation of your country, if you obtain annual parliaments, and universal suffrage; it will be no longer in the power of a set of worthless beings to crimp, murder and starve you, for the gratification of their caprice, rapacity, and ambition.

"Adhere then to reason, and to the principles of truth and justice; for these are the principles of liberty: and be well assured, that when the principles of liberty shall be well understood throughout the country, when facts shall be known, and causes properly investigated, it will be no longer in the power of tyrannical ministers to oppress you under the semblance of liberty; or, in the words of the poet, to

"Make us slaves, and tell us 'tis our charter."

When those principles shall be properly understood, mankind will see and abhor the wickedness and deformity of the present system; and the instruments will be no longer to be found by whom the oppressions we groan under can be carried on.

"Well then, Citizens, for what purposes do you meet? Certainly not at this moment to redress your wrongs upon the spot, but to speak the means of redress; and to point out those means to you, I believe, will be the best act of friendship that can be done towards you. This, it is true, is no easy task, but let us enquire till we have found it out. One thing, at least, I think we must already have discovered, namely, that in the present aggravated state of oppression and misery,

misery, the wrongs of mankind cannot be redressed in detail. They must be redressed by wholesale; that is to say, by the removal of the cause for it is impossible for any human being, or association of human beings, to have the power or the means of relieving, one by one, all the calamities he beholds. The real lover of mankind must therefore labour to redress their wrongs, by purifying the fountain of political dispensation. What are these impure and polluted fountains? Parliamentary corruption! the system of cabinet intrigue! the system of rotten boroughs! It is by these that the people are deprived of their right of electing those who are to make the laws by which they are to be governed, and the consequence of this privation is, as might naturally be expected, that those who make the laws pay no attention to the interests of those who have no influence in appointing them to make them. And be assured, it is by the discussion of principles alone, by laying the axe of reason to the root of the tree of corruption, that the blighting foliage of luxury, and the poisonous fruit of oppression, can be destroyed. And this is not to be done by tumultuary rashness, by personal animosity, malevolence, or faction. It is to be effected only by steady adherence to reason, truth, and justice, and whoever, by the violation of these principles, gives a handle to the tools of despotism for exercising their beloved system of oppressive coercion, whatever may be his motives, his sincerity, or his zeal, is, in effect, an enemy to the cause of freedom, and not a friend."

Was this a language to excite disorder, to create tumult, or occasion outrage? The only difference between the right honourable gentleman and the society was, that the one had abandoned the parliamentary reform, while the others stood by it, and would ultimately gain their object.

If the House will give me leave, said Mr. Sturt, I will read a bit of treason. Since I have shewn what is *not* treason, I will now shew what *is* treason; and if the House knows its own dignity, and feels the same regard for it that I do, it will not hesitate one moment to prosecute the author. The author is a magistrate of Newfoundland, a man directly in the pay, and under the influence, of ministers, and I will venture to assert, that the paragraph I am now about to quote, from the pamphlet he has published, is one of the most atrocious libels that ever has appeared against the House of Commons, and against the constitution of this country. The following daring passage is his definition of monarchy:

"With the exception of the advice and consent of the Two Houses of Parliament, and the intervention of Juries, the Government, and the administration

of it in all its parts, may be said to rest wholly and solely on the King, and those appointed by him. Those two adjuncts of Parliament and Justice are subsidiary and occasional, but the King's power is a substantive one, always visible and active. By his officers, and in his name, every thing is transacted that relates to the peace of the realm and the protection of the subject. The subject feels this, and acknowledges with thankfulness a superintending Sovereignty, which alone is congenial to the sentiments and temper of Englishmen. In fine, the Government of England is a *Monarchy*; the Monarch is the ancient stock from which have sprung those goodly branches of the Legislature, the Lords and Commons, that at the same time give ornament to the tree, and still shelter it of which it seeks protection under it. But these are still only branches, and derive their origin and their nutriment from their common parent: they may be lopped off, and the tree is a tree still, shorn, indeed, of its honours, but not, like them, cast into the fire. The Kingly Government may go on, in all its functions, without Lords or Commons: it has heretofore done so for years together, and in our times it does so during every recess of parliament; but, without the king, no parliament is more. The king, therefore, alone it is who necessarily subsists without change or diminution, and from him alone we unceasingly derive the protection of law and government.

"Lopped off" (continued Mr. Sturt.) This is a pretty fellow! What sort of a tree will the constitution be when the House of Commons is lopped off? Ministers know this. A admonition has been given respecting this, and that a letter was sent upon it, and yet the whole has hitherto been suffered to remain unnoticed by them." On this account it was that Mr. Sturt then brought it forward. It was a most infamous libel, and the duty he owed to parliament, and to his country, obliged him to do so. If Lee was amenable to the laws, was not Reeves so? Mr. Sturt was unwilling to institute prosecutions against any man; but when a man like this went trotting about to every dirty hole and corner to hunt up seditious publications, (for he had even been and threatened Citizen Lee's mother for selling a few pamphlets, while he himself was guilty of a greater crime,) he should not be permitted to pass unnoticed. It was impossible that the Hon. and learned Gentleman opposite (the Attorney General) could read every pamphlet that was published; but notice had been given of this, and therefore he should have examined it. Mr. Sturt concluded by moving for leave to bring up the petition, which was signed by 12,113 people, a great part of whom had not only given their names, but places of abode.

The motion being put and seconded, leave was given to bring up the petition, which was addressed in the following words:

To the Honourable the Commons of Great Britain, in Parliament assembled :

The Petition of the undersigned British Inhabitants of London and its Environs, assembled together, to express their true Sentiments, according to the Tenor of the BILL OF RIGHTS, on the Subjects of the threatened Invasion of their Constitutional Liberties.

“ May it please your Honourable House.

“ Your Petitioners approach you, once more, to make their grievances and apprehensions known, in a legal and constitutional manner, to that branch of the legislature, which, from its legal style and form, was evidently intended to be the constitutional guardian of the Peoples’ Liberties, and the champion of its rights and privileges ! But we approach you, not as heretofore, to claim the reformation of existing abuses ; if those claims had been attended to, the cause of our present petition could never have existed. We come not to repeat our unanswered arguments on the necessity of a Parliamentary Reform : (the very proposition of the measures we now protest against is a demonstrative evidence of the necessity of such reform ;) but we approach you with constitutional reverence and British firmness, to conjure you not to drive the people of this distressed and irritated nation to such despair as the adoption of the coercive system in agitation before you, we are firmly persuaded, in the end must inevitably produce. We conjure this Honourable House to remember, that the vital energies of the British Constitution consist of the liberties of speech and of the press ; that the safety and preservation of our lives and liberties (most after that immortal institution the trial by jury) depend upon the strict observance of the provisions of that admirable statute of treason, extorted by a virtuous House of Commons from Edward the Third. We conjure you also to remember, that the invasion of these liberties, and the violation of this safety, by arbitrary institutions, and new theories of constructive treasons, though sometimes assumed under pretences of ancient prerogatives, and sometimes confirmed by corrupt representatives, and arbitrary acts of Parliament, have never failed of being productive of consequences the most alarming both to the government and people. That the adoption of those very maxims and precedents upon which the proposed measures are evidently founded, brought one unhappy prince of the House of Stuart to the scaffold, and drove another with his posterity from the throne ; and that therefore to propose and support such measures, is, in reality, to endanger not only the tranquillity of the nation, but the safety of his Majesty’s Person and government, in support of which these measures are said to be brought forward.

“ Permit us solemnly to conjure this Honourable House to recollect the events that immediately preceded and produced the revolution of 1688 ; the doctrine advanced in justification of that memorable event, and the principle, which established the House of Brunswick on the throne. Let us conjure you also to consider, with due deliberation, the limits and the sacred nature of that compact which

exists between the government and the people; and the dreadful consequences which must inevitably ensue, if ever those limits should be violated, or this compact broken! If those circumstances are duly considered, we feel a settled confidence that the strong, and hitherto unparalleled attempts to destroy the personal security of the people of those realms, and annihilate the sacred right of political discussion, will meet with the decided reprobation of this Honourable House; that precedents drawn from the tyrannical reigns of the Tudors and the Stuarts, will be rejected with indignation; and that this Honourable House will be struck with horror at the idea of staining the annals of the House of Brunswick, by the revival of those very measures which brought the House of Stuart into such general odium, and was productive of such intolerable oppression, as to justify the resistance of the people, and produce that glorious revolution, upon the principles of which, and of which alone, the House of Brunswick is, at this time, entitled to the British Crown.

"Your petitioners therefore pray this Honourable House to consider the purport and tendency of the Bill introduced, for the restriction, or rather the utter prevention, of popular assemblies for the purpose of political investigation, and to dismise it with that marked disapprobation it so justly deserves; to guard with the most inviolable respect that sacred institution, the trial by jury; and to suffer no arbitrary innovations, under any pretence whatever, on the existing laws of treason and sedition; laws which have hitherto been found fully competent to all the just purposes of free and equitable government.

"And, finally we entreat this Honourable House to believe, that when we profess our abhorrence of all tumult and violence, and reject with the utmost indignation the groundless calumnies that have been spread against our peaceful, orderly, and constitutional meetings, we do so from a firm and long settled conviction that all acts of violence and outrage are most eminently inimical to that great cause of national and constitutional liberty to which we are attached. At the same time we conjure you to confide in the firmness and temperance of the people of Great Britain, who, we trust, have not degenerated from the spirit and bravery of their ancestors, nor forgotten the important lessons inculcated by their examples."

Mr. *Wilberforce* said he had received a letter from Lord Mornington, stating that indisposition obliged him to be absent. In that letter the noble lord declared, that when he delivered his speech, he was persuaded that there was a connection betwixt the principles of the London Corresponding Society and the outrage on his Majesty which followed; and he doubted not, but that when he should be able to come down again to the House, he would have it in his power to make that connection appear; Mr. *Wilberforce* added, that he was persuaded no Gentlemen would be more ready to come forward and establish his assertions than that noble lord.

Mr.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, that the noble lord, or, indeed, if the House, by its votes, could be cleared from the imputation of indulging in calumnies, it must be by consenting to go into an enquiry and evidence of facts, and not by resting upon bare suppositions. The more he enquired, the more he was convinced that the noble lord had been egregiously misinformed: assertion was no proof. It came out, upon enquiry, that Citizen Lee was not printer to the Corresponding Society; that inflammatory publications were not circulated by their authority, nor had the particular hand-bill, entitled "King Killing no Murder," been authorised by them. The whole must have been the fabrication of some person who wished to bring the society into discredit. He remembered a circumstance similar which took place in "The Society of Friends of Freedom;" a person who, from his violence, was suspected of being a spy, contrived to extinguish the lights, when a great number of hand-bills was thrown about the room, of a seditious and inflammatory nature. Upon the lights being restored, and the hand-bills read, the society expressed their abhorrence of this transaction, and their disapprobation of the hand-bills; and they used every endeavour to discover the authors of them, who were probably the Government Reporters. Was it, he asked, fitting that the House should assume the fact of such hand-bills being published by the Corresponding Society, and upon that assumption, should pass acts, which, in their extent, affected the whole kingdom? He complimented Mr. Sturt highly on his speech, which he declared to have contained much good sense, and to have been delivered in as plain, manly, and constitutional language as he had ever heard. He animadverted on the pamphlet mentioned by Mr. Sturt, which was clearly a libel upon the House of Commons, was it a light thing that such a libeller as this should go unpunished? That such a libeller should be suffered to print, and to circulate the most atrocious libels upon the constitution unnoticed was scandalous. If there was any thing he said which served to keep up in the country the ball of contention, it was this glaring partiality. This discovered itself in the year 1791, after the Birmingham riots. Nothing of that activity was discovered against the church and king mob, who destroyed the houses of peaceable citizens; nothing of that activity against the libellers of dissenters, when they were charged with wanting to poison the river water. Where were the importunity and activity of the legislature on those occasions? It was no his wish Mr. *Sheridan* said, to prosecute for publications in general; but there were various publications, not only of Mr. Reeves,

but of Mr. Arthur Young, which were infinitely more atrocious libels against the constitution, than any that had been pointed out by the noble lord. Nor could he suppose, that if a prosecution against such libellers was moved, that any of his Majesty's ministers dare oppose it.

Mr. *Canning* repeated his former arguments, that were it stated as an historic fact that such a outrage was committed on his Majesty, that a few days previous to the circumstance taking place, an hand-bill had been circulated at a public meeting, that king-killing was no murder, and yet, that no connection could be traced between that outrage and this hand-bill, that few or none could be found who would be inclined to draw such an improbable conclusion. He said, he believed the hon. gentleman (Mr. Sturt) was singular in his opinion, that, excepting the title, he saw no harm in the hand bill.

Mr. *Whitbread* declared, he could not conceive how the honourable gentleman, by his speech, had established any such connection. If that honourable gentleman had consented to have gone into an enquiry as to facts, then the hand-bill might have been traced to its source; but without such a Committee being instituted he considered it as a foul calumny to insinuate, that the hand-bill was the production of the London Corresponding Society; whilst, at the same time, every request to have an enquiry instituted was refused.

Mr. *Lambton* said, a doubt arose in his mind, whether the hand-bill was written by any member of the London Corresponding Society, or by one of the spies or reporters of government? The quotations given by a noble lord, rendered such an enquiry necessary; without an enquiry, the publication was undeserving of notice. It had been said in behalf of the noble lord, (lord Mornington,) that he was not in the habit of making rash assertions. He believed that to be true, and yet, as those on his side of the House, who had made enquiry, denied the charges adduced, he submitted, whether, in point of candour and duty, the House ought not to have instituted an enquiry? He adverted to the pamphlet, entitled, "Thoughts on the English Government," which was ascribed to Mr. Reeves, and declared, that it was the duty of the Attorney General, if he meant to administer equal justice, to prosecute the author of the pamphlet with due severity. In that pamphlet, monarchy had been compared to a tree; but he would observe, that, in order to its growth in this country, it was necessary that it should be planted in the soil of liberty; in no other would it flourish; in this soil alone would it attain vigour; and if endeavours should be used to transplant it into
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any other soil, the fair and goodly tree would pine away, decay, and perish.

Mr. *Canning* rose to explain. One gentleman he remarked had intimated, that the hand-bill, excepting the title alone was but little objectionable; another gentlemen had vindicated this assertion; he therefore thought he had a right to draw the inference he had done on such declarations.

Mr. *Sturt* rose to explain. He declared he did not mean to say that the doctrine contained in these hand-bills and pamphlets was not abominable; but that, take away the title—"King-killing no Murder," much of the offence contained in the publications would cease.

Mr. *Martin* in a short speech disclaimed the idea that what any Hon. Gentleman on that side of the House said, should be imputed to him, or considered as the act of the whole; that it was sufficient for him to express his own sentiments, without being accountable for the expressions of others.

Mr. *Grey* vindicated Mr. *Sturt* from what he termed, the misrepresentation of an honourable gentleman, (Mr. *Canning*); he shewed that the honourable gentleman's, (Mr. *Canning*'s) favourite argument, that such a doctrine was preached at Copenhagen-house, and that such a practice followed, might be retorted on ministry. Mr. *Sturt*'s speech, he said, contained much good sense, and sound constitutional principles. He pointed out the dilemma in which the house was involved. It was said to be necessary, on account of what had passed at Copenhagen-house, to pass a law to restrain public discussion; and yet it appeared that no such doctrine was held as has been stated, nor could the offensive hand-bill be brought home to that society. Would the people of England, he asked, tamely look on, and see their liberties torn from them upon such a shallow pretence? The spirits of Englishmen were not, he hoped, so far extinguished; the people of England would know that nothing objectionable had passed at Copenhagen-house, and they would reject the idea, that, because a single solitary hand bill had been circulated, which had no connection with the Society, therefore, with one sweep of authority, the whole liberties of the people of England are to be obliterated! Mr. *Grey* animadverted on the pamphlet of Mr. *Reeves*, and observed, that, in better times, his Majesty's Attorney General would have instituted a prosecution against such a libeller of the constitution on his own accord. So far from giving credit to the existence of the treasons reported, he verily believed that no other treason was hatched; but what proceeded from his Majesty's Cabinet. It

had been asserted in another place, that the people had nothing to do with the laws but to obey them. To use the words of an honourable gentleman, when he heard such doctrine, and saw such practices immediately follow that doctrine, what was he to suppose, but that a system of terror was to be attempted to be introduced in this country, and that a conspiracy against the liberties of the people actually existed?

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, the house had insensibly got into a warm debate before the order of the day had been read, and consequently before the real business of the day was fairly under their consideration; he complained of the protraction which the important business of the day was likely to experience from the irregular debate that had arisen. It was in his idea unnecessary to enter into the merits of the question at that time, he would therefore reserve himself until the Bills went into a Committee. Most of the arguments urged against the measures, he thought, applied the other way, and were cogent reasons for adopting them, however unnecessarily they had been brought forward in that stage of the business. But what purpose could be answered by this irregular discussion, he was at a loss to imagine, except that of delaying the business for a day.

Mr. Fox said, he considered the conversation to be perfectly in order. A large body of the people of England had been accused of disloyalty and sedition, and the proofs, which were necessary to confirm the allegations, had been resolutely denied. No attempt, therefore, that could be made to free them from suspicion, and to confute the reflections which had been thrown upon their characters by a noble lord on a former night, could, in justice be deemed disorderly or irregular. He concurred completely with his honourable friend (Mr. Sturt) respecting the hand-bill that had been so much talked of respecting *king-killing*, that excepting the title, the contents of the paper were too contemptible for notice; and he submitted it to the consideration of the house, whether it was fair to apply the title of a hand-bill, the matter of which was too insignificant to be regarded in any other light than as consummately contemptible, of a hand-bill, the real origin of which it was impossible to ascertain, to the whole proceedings of any society, who never appeared by any one public act avowed by them, to have used or countenanced a single word which the hand-bill contained. Nor was this the only point of view, Mr. Fox said, in which it could be proved that the discussion was in order. Bills had been brought into parliament,

parliament, apparently founded on the abuses practised by certain societies, the proceedings of which had been adverted in debate; it was therefore strictly regular to accompany a petition from these societies with an open and candid explanation of their principles and views: it was strictly regular to enquire into the facts upon which the measures proposed were said to rest; and to investigate the grounds of the despotic plan which ministers had formed of reducing the people under a yoke, which neither they nor their fathers had been accustomed to bear, nor were willing to submit to. With respect to what had been urged on the impropriety of delaying the progress of the Bill, in his opinion, the house would do essential service to themselves and their constituents, if they could but retard the passing of the Bills for a single day. It had been said, that gentlemen on the side of the house on which he stood, felt strong upon the occasion, and that they were forward in bringing on the debate before it could regularly take place. He owned, that he had no small satisfaction in the consciousness that they did not feel weak, and that their opinion possessed every sanction which the loud and unanimous voice of the people could confer. All he wished was, that ministers would abide by their declaration, and that they would continue obstinately to press the Bills upon the house, after they were found to be generally unpopular.

Mr. *Morrice Robinson* was decidedly of opinion, that the Bills ought not to be hurried through the house, but that time should be allowed for ascertaining the sentiments and opinions of their constituents.

Mr. *Powys* said, that understanding Citizen Lee to be the publisher or vender of certain inflammatory papers, extracts of which had been read to the house on a former night, he was led to conclude that Citizen Lee was the printer to the London Corresponding Society. He therefore from such premises inferred, that the inflammatory papers originated in the London Corresponding Society.

General Tarleton said, he could not praise the ingenuity of Mr. Powys, in drawing such conclusion from such premises. Because Citizen Lee sold the speech of Mr. Thelwall, no reason could, in his opinion, be drawn to prove the connection of Citizen Lee with the London Corresponding Society. The Right Honourable Gentleman opposite to him might just as well contend, that because his speech might appear in some of the public prints the next morning, he was,

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in some degree, answerable for all the sentiments which those prints might contain.

Mr. Courtenay rose in order to prove the absurdity of Mr. Powys's argument. Thelwall's speech, it seemed, was sold by Citizen Lee. Perhaps the honourable gentleman's speech would be printed in the *True Briton*; did it follow from thence that the printer of the *True Briton* was his printer? With respect to the hand-bill in question, entitled, "*King-killing*," Mr. Courtenay said, he was persuaded, that it had been written and circulated by one of the spies, *alias* reporters of government, in order to fix a stigma on the characters of those whose proceedings they were appointed to watch. His conviction on that point, he declared, was strengthened by the circumstances attending the pop-gun plot. A man had been expelled from the Corresponding Society for immorality. This degradation he considered as an insult, and determined to take a speedy opportunity of revenging it. In order to effect this, he * gave information to the Privy Council of a plot which had been formed to assassinate his Majesty, naming, at the same time, a few respectable persons concerned in the treason, and, by way of evidence, produced a drawing of an air-gun. Upon that information they were taken into custody, and confined in prison for several months, without any plausible reason being assigned for such a violent proceeding. Mr. Parkinson, a medical gentleman of high respectability, had spoken to the general good character of one of the suspected delinquents; but his interference proved of no benefit in justifying their characters, or meliorating their situations. The individual in question entreated being brought to trial, but his enemies could not face him before an English jury. He demanded his release, but his demand was refused; and he was desired to supplicate, as a favour, what he could not obtain as a right; as, Mr. Courtenay said, the Lords of the Privy Council never grant justice but as a favour. This plot had long afforded a topic for the ministerial newspapers to exercise their ingenuity upon, and was industriously spread by the *Chief Justice of Newfoundland*. All the time they were in confinement, paragraphs appeared in the *True Briton*, the *Sun*, the *Times*, and even in the *Gazette*, in order to prejudice the country against those who had been falsely calumniated; and in order to influence the

* This, to the Reporter's knowledge is a mistake, a gentleman of credit and character accidentally heard of the plot, and as every good subject ought to have done, immediately communicated what he had heard, to government.

minds of a British jury, to give an unjust sentence, founded upon a perversion of the laws. Mr. Courtenay declared, he was no apologist of these societies; he never attended them, nor bore any part in their councils, consequently he knew not whether they had been guilty of abuses or not. If they had committed any irregularities, the existing laws, he was satisfied, were sufficient to punish them. In a letter written by Smith to the Privy Council, he mentioned the relief which he had received from the London Corresponding Society; and he should not have been surprised, by a mode of reasoning analogous to that which had been adopted that evening, that, if these men had been found guilty, from the simple circumstance of Smith's receiving a pecuniary assistance from the Corresponding Society, his crime would have been charged upon that body. At least it would not have been more absurd and unjust than to implicate that Society in all the seditious libels which had been published by Citizen Lee. If there were any who doubted the sufficiency of the existing laws, he called upon them to reflect on the hard fortune of a poor bookseller, who had been confined to several years imprisonment, for selling a pamphlet of the contents of which he was wholly ignorant, a severity which he thought might have satisfied the cold blooded malignity of ministers themselves.

BREACH OF PRIVILEGE.

Mr. Sturt moved, That the house do order the Attorney General to prosecute the author of "Thoughts on the English Government."

The *Speaker* said that the motion could not be made in that form. The honourable member should first make his complaint, and then move that the passage he complained of be read by the Clerk.

General Macleod moved that the whole of the pamphlet should be read, as there were many other libellous passages.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he would not enter into the discussion of the merits or demerits of the pamphlet alluded to, but he called upon the house to decide, whether they ought to sacrifice the important subject of discussion expected to occupy the attention of the house a great part of the evening, to an object of an inferior moment, which had accidentally occurred. He moved for the Order of the Day.

Mr. *Buxton* said, he wished that a prosecution might be entered into against the author of the pamphlet in question; but, at the same time, he would vote for the Order of the Day, in order that the Bill, which was the regular subject

for debate that day, and was sufficiently important to engage and occupy their whole attention might be gone through.

Mr. *Fekyll* said, when he recollected the unexampled rapidity with which two Bills, which aimed at the subversion of the liberties of the country, had been hurried through parliament, he was not surprised at any mode of expediting their progress, which the minister, in the warmth of his zeal, might press upon a House of Commons, whom he always found obsequious to his wishes. He put it, however, to the consciences of members, whether a measure, which struck at the very salvation of the liberty of the people, was to receive their final sanction, before their constituents had sent them the instructions of which they ought to be in possession in their deliberations upon a matter of the utmost moment. He appealed also to the sense which the representatives of the Commons of Great Britain entertained of their own dignity, if they would tamely suffer the political and constitutional necessity of their existence to be called in question. He said he took credit to himself for having been the first to expose the pamphlet to public censure, or rather, he might have said, to public execration; and he asked if, in other times, indeed if in any times but the present, a person could be sheltered under the auspices of government, from the consequences of such an attack upon two constituent branches of the legislature; or whether his being a hireling of administration would screen him from the punishment of a libeller of a British House of Commons? Except he was protected by power and influence, he was persuaded that he would find no asylum in the justice of the country. He doubted not there were still enough of honour and independence in a British jury, and virtue sufficient in English judges, to bring the author to condign punishment. The question was not, whether the House of Commons ought to be calumniated, it went further, and was whether it ought to be lopped off as an excrescence. He spoke on the ground of privilege; and therefore the question which he spoke to was entitled to the priority of every other decision. He appealed to the highest authority of the House (the chair) whether he was not right, and whether the passage that had been read was not a breach of privilege? He therefore hoped that the House would come to a decision of so momentous and constitutional a point; and if, by such discussion, he should be successful enough to retard the progress of the Bills, he should consider it as a most fortunate occurrence. He hoped that the petitions of the Commons of Great Britain would come thundering at their door, and that they would force from the hands of a desperate

perate administration, the dagger they had raised in order to plunge it into the vitals of the liberties of England, and that the House would never forget the criminal intentions of the assassin who had meditated the stroke.

The *Speaker* said, it was the established practice of that House to give a preference to all questions of privilege. The question then was, whether this was a breach of privilege? if it was, another question arose, viz. whether it was of a nature to justify the House in discussing it before any other business? These questions were for the decision of the House.

Mr. *Burdon* said, he could not pretend to possess enough knowledge of the subject of privilege to be able to speak to that question. He allowed the importance of the matter in debate; when however he recollected the anxiety of the public mind to know the precise nature of the Bills pending in parliament, he was extremely desirous that the House should go into a committee on one of them that night.

Mr. *Erskine* said, that having the highest of all authorities, that of the *Speaker*, to consider the present as a subject of great importance, he should decline entering upon any collateral matter in answer to what had been advanced on the relative importance of the order of the day. He was extremely sorry that the rules of the House did not entitle them to ask the opinion of the *Speaker* on another point, viz. whether it was a question of privilege or not? This being the case, however, all that was left him was to take the opinion of the House. Taking it for granted that the passage quoted from Mr. Reeves's pamphlet, was a libel, it must, he said, be either considered as a question of privilege, or not. If it was not a matter of privilege, it was prejudging the case to direct the King's Attorney General to file an information against the presumed libeller. If it was a libel, (and if it was not, he knew not what was, for not only the Constitution, but the very existence of the House of Commons, was represented, as a matter of little or no concern,) the only point to be settled was, whether a libel upon the House of Commons was, or was not, a question of privilege. He would adduce a precedent: in the case of the King against Stockdale, who reflected on the conduct of that House respecting Mr. Hastings, upon what authority did the House order the Attorney General to file an information against him? In that case, the House immediately voted that the libeller be prosecuted in the King's Bench, on a breach of privilege; if a person say, that, if the Lords and Commons be lopped off from the Constitution, was it a less breach of privilege? Mr. *Erskine* said, he would make no motion that the

House follow the precedent he had quoted; but the Speaker had distinctly said, that if it amounted to a breach of privilege, it ought to have the precedency of any other inquiry. Should this observation of the Speaker's be right, of which he entertained no doubt, would gentlemen, at a time they were passing laws against unproved seditions and suppositious treasons, forbear enquiry whether the maintaining that two branches of the legislature were equivalent to nothing, was punishable? Would the house shew a total insensibility to the public mind, at present roused, irritated, and anxious at finding their liberties being attacked by the Bills pending in parliament? If they passed such a libel unnoticed, such treason against the constitution, they would oblige the people to doubt whether or not they had any liberty.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer had, he observed, pressed the importance of the Bills, as if the people of England were more anxious to have their liberties taken away, than to preserve the existence of that invaluable right, the right of representation; a position which the Right Hon. Gentleman might endeavour to palm upon the House, but it would require much more ingenuity of argument than he could command, to render it credible.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he did not mean to argue upon any of the sentiments contained in the pamphlet. A motion had been made to direct the Attorney General to prosecute the author; which he thought irregular and informal, the House of Commons being vested with the power of vindicating their own rights, and punishing the violation of their privileges. He wished therefore to pass to the order of the day.

Mr. *Charles Wyndham* put it seriously to gentlemen, whether or not they would pass to the order of the day, when such a complaint was stated to them? His own opinion was that they ought to vote, that the order of the day be postponed, and the pamphlet taken into immediate consideration.

Mr. *Fox* said, the Hon. Gentleman had in some measure anticipated what he was going to say in stating his sense of a libel; it did not follow, as he assumed, that the whole nature of the case was changed, because another gentleman had said, he saw, the case in a different light. In the case of Stockdale, as stated by his learned friend, the matter was put upon its right foundation. How truly had it been said, that men felt tenderly on the side of personal interells, but differently on that of justice. France emerged from a state of slavery, and shook off the chains of her tyrants; a general flame throughout Eu-

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rope was the consequence; an armament was ordered; war was declared; millions of treasure had been expended, and thousands of lives had been sacrificed. Poland was robbed of her liberties by the lawless grasp of overgrown ambition. In one speech of the minister, he lamented over the scene of oppression, and shortly after, a treaty was signed to guarantee the robbery. The Corresponding Societies came forward with spirit in the cause of parliamentary reform, and a few paltry libels were published; the *habeas corpus* act was suspended; indictments for high treasons were drawn and presented to grand juries; new treasons were enacted, and the bill of rights was repealed; a more atrocious libel than any that had been published had appeared from the pen of a ministerial hireling against the House of Commons, and the motion which was made is the order of the day. Good Good, Sir! if the house passes to the order of the day, said Mr. Fox, what idea will the people have of us as friends to the constitution and lovers of impartiality? How different, said he, are the errors on the side of liberty, and the errors on the side of despotism! Though he was not by any means inclined to recommend prosecutions for opinion, yet, in the present instance, he called upon the house to come forward in vindication of their privilege, their dignity, and their existence.

Mr. *Serjeant Aldair* said, that, although the present discussion was rather untimely, he could not vote for the order of the day, when a subject came before the house which no one could doubt was a breach of privilege and that, a breach of privilege of the grossest nature. He professed himself to be a total stranger to the pamphlet, and its author; he could not however tamely hear it asserted, that the House of Commons could be lopped off, and that government might go on with its wonted vigour. So different was his opinion, that he was convinced the monarchy of the country could not go on an hour without the House of Commons, without the existence and practical exercise of those doctrines which placed the monarch of the country on the throne. The publication in question, was, he said, clearly a breach of privilege; and the best way of coming to the order of the day, would be to have the pamphlet first read, that the house might determine upon it.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, there could be no doubt of the order of the day, when a breach of privilege was complained of: the honourable mover of the question should therefore have stated the passage in the regular form of a complaint to the house, and had the words taken down; his complaining of the Attorney General not having prosecuted the book, was, in a

manner, giving up his claim upon the house to take notice of it.

Mr. *Sheridan* said it was easy to get rid of the dilemma which the Right Hon. Gentleman had made out. In order therefore to remove the punctilio devised by the political special pleader, he would comply with the forms of the house, and move that the particular passage be taken down: which being done, he replied to the observation of Mr. *Serjeant Adair*, and urged the propriety of an immediate discussion. He quoted another sentence or two from the pamphlet, and said he would not advert to the outrage which the passage also reflected against the lords, but leave them to assert their own dignity, nor would he insult the feelings or the understanding by enlarging upon the atrocity of the outrage, as if any thing were necessary to carry to their mind a proper sense of its magnitude.

Mr. *Serjeant Adair*, in explanation, declared that it would, in his opinion, have been a more timely season to have brought the present business forward, when it had been first noticed.

Mr. *M. Robinson* said, that the designs of ministers were notorious; they prosecuted with severity all who wished to reform the abuses of government; but the advocates of despotism were their own friends, and hence they would let them go unpunished: The Right Hon. Gentleman had endeavoured to overthrow the constitution, but his aim had been defeated.

The *Attorney General* said, he was happy that the debate had taken such a turn, because it went to support the honour and dignity of the house. Before he could decide upon the passage in question, he should think it became him, as a jury would do, to read the whole book, in order to see whether the context qualified the argument complained of as a breach of privilege. Surely, from a single passage, the honourable Member had not a sufficient claim on the house to deem it a breach of privilege. In his opinion the whole book ought to be read before the house could decide that point.

The *Secretary at War* said, the purpose for which the present subject had been introduced by gentlemen on the other side of the House was extremely obvious, nor would he have risen to favour in the least degree their views of trespassing upon and occupying the time which should have been devoted to a more important discussion, had it not been to prevent the conclusion which silence might have served to corroborate, that he agreed with gentlemen on his side of the house as to the libellous nature of the passages. He was not yet prepared to give any opinion upon that point; he did not, however think the character

rafter of it a juſt one. As far as he was then prepared to decide on it, it might be perfectly innocent. It was, he thought, merely ſpeaking to a fact about which antiquarians might diſpute, viz. whether the Monarchy was antecedent to the other parts of the Conſtitution; and might poſſibly ſurvive or ſubſiſt without them? It was ſuch an opinion as any hiſtorian might, he conceived, give of any form of polity: poſſibly it was wrong; he imagined, that there was not in the context any thing to juſtify gentlemen in ſo ſeverely attacking it. If it were tried before that tribunal which gentlemen ſentenced it to, he did not think though there was no ground to conclude that Mr. Reeves was the author, there was ſufficient to condemn it. Of the perſon who was ſaid to be the author, very indecent language had been uſed; the gentlemen who ſo traduced his character had doubtleſs good reaſon for their conduct: the author had incurred their diſpleaſure in proportion as he had gained the good will of the country. He hoped neither the houſe nor the country would forget his exertions in the year 1792, in which he was followed by the whole nation. If they forgot thoſe laudable exertions, they were ungrateful. Mr. Reeves was a man holding an honourable place under Government, and receiving the rewards of honourable ſervices: His conduct in general was approved by the greater, and, he was ſure, the better part of the nation. But the conduct of Oppoſition had expoſed them to the imputation of being too deeply involved in the machinations which the activity of Mr. Reeves had laboured to deſtroy; and why was he on this account to be debarred from ſpeaking his ſentiments, or from contributing to defend the Conſtitution? [Here he was called to Order by *Mr. C. Wyndham.*]

The Speaker ſaid, that if any thing was miſtated by the Honourable Gentleman, he might be corrected when he ſhould fit down.

The Secretary at War continued. Gentlemen oppoſite to him charged his Maſteſty's Miniſters with being ſlow in calling libellers to juſtice; they argued as if the Conſtitution was overturned by a ſingle libel, when they had no ſuch apprehenſions on account of the ſwarms of libels which had been taken notice of by the Houſe; libels which never could be contradicted. Did they feel no apprehenſion from all the Labels of the Societies, though their profeſſed object was the ruin of the Conſtitution? Theſe were the errors of liberty, to be ſure. But though their avowed intention was the ſubverſion of all order and government, there were none of theſe alarms felt by gentlemen oppoſite to him. Except the ſingle libel of Paine, which every one felt at his own door, there

was

was not one acknowledged by the Opposition to be unconstitutional. Gentlemen were sure that Lords and Commons were arraigned in the publication alluded to, though they never before evinced the smallest sensibility about all the calumny which the Societies threw upon Parliament. Even in the speeches of many of the Honourable Gentlemen opposite to him, he and his friends had been distinctly arraigned; he wished the country to judge, whether there was more despotism in the Ministry, or anarchy in the Opposition. He knew the purpose of their severity and the abuse of Mr. Reeves. The country, he said, would judge whether the danger of despotism, or the danger of anarchy, were most to be apprehended. The people would decide upon the conduct of what an Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Courtenay) had formerly called a despicable, wicked, and detestable Administration, and the views of a daring and desperate Opposition, who, to conceal their own crimes, would introduce the anarchy of France and all its horrors. He knew well their motive for traducing Mr. Reeves, and other active Magistrates, and especially those of Westminster, many of whom were men of great respectability. Their designs and aims were clearly developed, and their zeal after their former supineness well understood. The Secretary at War concluded with saying, if the charge amounted to a breach of Privilege, it might be tried: but as far as he could judge, the sentiment was innocent, and by no means justified the commentaries bestowed upon it.

General Smith said he believed the Right Honourable Gentleman was the only man in the House who would venture to declare those unconstitutional opinions, sentiments so derogatory to the Constitution and the privileges of that house. He had heard the Right Honourable Gentleman on other occasions, when the Liberties of his Country hung on his tongue with honied eloquence; when he heard him maintain the utter subversion of it, the complete overthrow of all his former uphodings, in such strong language as he had then held, he could not help exclaiming—

“Who would not laugh if such a man there be;

“Who would not weep if *Atticus* were he?”

He must lament that the right honourable gentleman was so changed and altered from himself. Would any man then, who considered how jealous the House of Commons were of their privileges, set one moment quiet, and hear such doctrines supported? He found in the entry of the standing orders of the house, on their journals, a complaint against the Honourable
Alexander

Alexander Murray, for a libel against the House of Commons in the year 1771, in a pamphlet published by him, called "An Appeal to the People of Great Britain;" the consequence of which was, an Address to his Majesty, that he would give directions that his Attorney General should prosecute the authors, printers, or publishers of it. Why had not Administration followed the precedent in the present instance agreeable to the honourable gentleman (Mr. Sturt's) motion, instead of pretending that other important business claimed the first attention of the House: The peaceable demeanour of all ranks of people, in associations the most numerous, in every respect, that had ever been known in the country, the General said, was a complete proof that the Bills were not of the importance pretended.

Mr. Hardinge said, that he was attached politically and personally to the right honourable gentleman, (Mr. Windham) but that he could not help expressing astonishment and concern at his opinion, that such a passage as that before them insulated as it stood, and upon the first blush of it, even was innocent; no regard for *him* (and there was not one of his numerous friends who could more ingenuously revere him) could induce him to be silent after such an opinion had been delivered, or to suppress the feelings of his mind upon the subject. He thought it as gross a libel upon the Commons of England as could be imagined; and though he was clearly of opinion, *upon general principles*, he read the whole work before he condemned the writer. He would make no scruple to say, that he thought no context would or could explain away the guilt of those words.

He said it was true that a jury would not even determine the sense of particular words without reference to the whole of the paper, and he hoped juries would never give up the right of examining the seditious tendency of that which an indictment should call a seditious libel.

He was clearly of opinion that a libel upon the House of Commons was a case of privilege, and thought it strange it should be necessary even to assert it; but he should certainly disdain to argue it.

He added that another topic had excited his concern, and that as a Member of Parliament he would ever protest against it. He meant what he had in the case of Mr. Hastings called a *set-off*; that is to say, a general panegyrick upon the individual whose conduct was accused, when it was only upon that conduct, as it stood by itself, that a judgement of the House could be given with dignity, public spirit, or effect.

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Mr. Grey said, he was not much surprised at the doctrine which he had heard delivered by the Honourable Gentleman who had just sat down; the conduct and principles which the Honourable Gentleman had lately adopted, had led him to consider the progress of his apostasy, which must hold him up, if not to the astonishment, at least to the reprobation of his friends; that progress was leading the counsels of the nation to so perilous a crisis, that he could not think of it without horror. What could not be expected, when the grossest and most flagrant treason to the constitution was not only asserted that it ought not to be punished, but was rewarded with the approbation of his Majesty's ministers? The treason against the House of Commons, or the other branch of the constitution, might go unheeded and unchecked, (nay that damnable and detestable doctrine contained in the pamphlet was supported,) whilst the least glance at kingly power, or its invasion, was punished with rigour.

The Honourable Gentleman had complained of the indecency of attacking absent characters. For his part, Mr. Grey said, he was not at all swayed by personal considerations respecting the author, or rather the gentleman to whom it was imputed; I confine myself to the damnable and abominable doctrine, says he, which has been maintained. This tenderness for absent characters with the Honourable Gentleman was but a novelty. Had it been Thelwall, or a gentleman whose name had been bandied so much about of late, Citizen Lee, who was abused on the authority of scraps of paper, which they could as little prove to be true as they would allow to be investigated, the idea of indecency would never have occurred to the Honourable Gentleman's mind; and, distorted as his imagination then was, he saw nothing unmanly, nothing unfair in what had been said against Mr. Reeves. Often had the Honourable Secretary at War, who was become the advocate of the present delinquent, listened with ecstasy for whole nights together to the detail of pretended conspiracies, glutting with a kind of rancorous joy upon the miserable catalogue made up of shreds and patches. The Honourable Gentleman considered the extract alluded to, as a fact for the consideration of antiquarians; that is to say, whether monarchy was the stock, and the lords and commons but the branches, which might be lopped off. If this was not a gross libel against the privileges of the house, he knew not what might be so considered. The author of this libel, it had been contended by the Honourable Gentleman, was entitled to candour and to indulgence. It was merely a fact
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for the disputation of antiquariæ. Had Citizen Lac, however, stated (by the way with much greater consistency to the principles of the constitution) that democracy was the trunk, and that monarchy was a branch which adorned it, but did not maintain the stock, would not the circumstance have excited all that warmth of eloquence which so much distinguished the Honourable Gentleman, and called forth that torrent of abuse of French politics and Jacobin projects; and had the words *lap off* been employed, it would have instantly associated all the ideas, and produced those descriptions which the Honourable Gentleman's warmth of fancy conjured up in such flowery and glowing colours. An antiquarian or historian, the Honourable Gentleman had said, might be exceedingly doubtful whether the lords and commons had not been mere branches from the root of monarchy. After so strange and so extraordinary language all his doubts at length vanish, and he speaks out: he thought proper, in the first instance to assert, without qualification or explanation, that the sentiment was perfectly innocent, and the passage, as it stood, without any qualification from the context, was perfectly innocent; let it therefore, said Mr. Grey, be examined. [He read the exceptionable passage as before stated.] Good God, said Mr. Grey, is this sentiment innocent? Let it proceed: "From the monarch alone we unceasingly derive the protection of law and government." This is an excellent sentiment, and purely innocent. The pamphlet goes on to say, "and such it is wished they should continue by nine tenths of the nation."

Mr. Grey said, he hoped the Honourable Gentleman would have the courage to support his opinion, and to defend the pamphlet in question. The Right Honourable Gentleman had thought proper to ascribe their hatred to Mr. Reeves to his conduct in 1792, and to date their desire to run him down from that period; for his own part, Mr. Grey said, he was ready to confess that the conduct of that gentleman, in 1792, did not much recommend him to his good opinion, and those persons who had been misled by Mr. Reeves, and induced to follow similar conduct and adopt similar opinions with him, lamented their acquiescence, as they saw, at this time, the measures that were produced in consequence.

The Honourable Gentleman had triumphantly asked, why they did not prosecute the Corresponding Society, and other seditious writers, well as this libeller of the House of Commons: the Honourable Gentleman might be answered, that to look to pamphlets was not their general system; their object was to look to government, to watch their measures with

jealousy and suspicion; but, on the other hand, when ministers were dealing out prosecutions in the gross, and in some cases stretching the laws beyond their tone, they had suffered this daring breach of privilege and libel on the constitution to go without any punishment whatsoever; a libel too, which from its tendency, was as much directed against the safety of the monarch, as against any other branch of the constitution.

Before he sat down, he begged leave again to ask the Right Honourable Gentleman, whether he would manfully and daringly, without construction, reservation, amendment, or qualification, by reasoning, and by his vote, at another time, support the opinions and sentiments which he had maintained that night? Mr. Grey concluded by declaring Mr. Reeves's pamphlet to be a most dangerous libel, and a libel seditiously and malignantly aimed at the safety of the Monarch.

Mr. Windham desired to be clearly understood; he had not intended to give a decided opinion on the subject, but he believed, his declaration had been, that he was not prepared definitively to give an opinion upon the extract; but as far as his judgment went, he thought one of the passages selected and recited in the course of the debate, only stated an historical fact, viz. "that the lords and commons were branches from monarchy," and the other, what might possibly be a fact, viz. "that the monarchy could subsist without these branches."

The Solicitor General said, he conceived that credit ought to be given to the Honourable Gentleman who submitted the charge to the house, and that the house ought to exercise sound judgment in enquiring whether or not the charge were just. When it was stated that it amounted to a breach of privilege, it struck him that it was incumbent on the house to have the pamphlet read. He hoped, therefore, that the motion would be withdrawn till that were done.

Mr. Brandling declared, he thought the passage a gross attack on the privileges of parliament; but he could not agree that the consideration of the subject ought then to supersede the other business before the house.

Mr. Lambton said, he could not conceal his surprize after what he had formerly heard, in public and private, from the Secretary at War, that able and eloquent speaker, that he should that day avow himself the assassin of liberty, his avowal was neither more or less than to that extent. The Hon. Gentleman affected a surprize that they should be roused at this solitary instance or an attack upon the constitution: was it a solitary instance? had it come there a solitary instance, it had found

found an auxiliary in the House of Commons, and from one high in trust and office. Was the instance solitary, when two Bills had been introduced, the one making an intention an overt-act of treason, and the other directly subversive of the fifth article of the Bill of Rights? Was it, he would ask, a solitary instance, when the Secretary at War had in the debate on the army estimates deliberately and unreservedly asserted that a large body of cavalry were fit and necessary to be maintained at home, in addition to 3000 or 5000 lately come from the continent, in order to force coercive measures down the throats of the people? When these political chymists were decomposing the elements of the constitution, and risking a new and dreadful chaos?

Mr. Fox said, it gave him some pain when any individual was talked of with acrimony in that house, but he could not avoid confessing, that he could not applaud the conduct of Mr. Reeves, or feel any great respect for his character. Since he had seen Mr. Thomas Law's letter in the public papers, exposing the principles of that society of which Mr. Reeves was chairman, every feeling of delicacy or respect towards him had left his mind; and he should deem himself unworthy of estimation, as a gentleman, if he did not speak of him in terms of reprobation. Was Mr. Reeves's pamphlet a solitary instance? Were none of Mr. Reeves's libels in circulation three years ago? (alluding to the publication regarding the Dissenters, &c.) Were there no publications maintaining divine and hereditary right, anointed kings, and other doctrines, as extraordinary as irreconcilable to the constitution? Away with such hood-winked dealings: it is time, said Mr. Fox, to declare to the country, and to all Europe, that despotic principles have no footing among us. Should it be permitted to go out to the world, that parliament coincided in opinions delivered by a member of parliament, a member of the cabinet, and a confidential adviser of his Majesty, on account of the private friendship which he sustained for the gentleman who supported these doctrines? He was glad that the Right Honourable Gentleman had stated his opinion openly; he was glad that those who had formerly been his friends spoke honestly and fairly; and he wished, most sincerely wished, that other gentlemen would give their opinions as openly; that all the king's ministers would declare their coincidence of opinion with the Honourable Gentleman, or else that they would disavow these principles entirely and completely. He hoped also, for the sake of private friendship, that the Secretary at War had not to lose sight of his former character, as not to avow and maintain his present opinion

on a future occasion. He hoped the house would not declare any opinion until the whole of the publication should be read; he would not, he said, follow those gentlemen who judged of a book piece-meal, by bits and scraps, and afterwards refused to go into an enquiry on the context, nature, and contents of those books, which they had partially and unfairly quoted; but he wished for the credit and character of the house, that they would read the whole of the pamphlet, and be governed in their proceeding, by the general tenour of it.

Mr. *Barham* gave it as his opinion, that the Secretary at War had not expressly maintained any doctrine whatsoever; if he had done so, he ought to repeat it; if not his accusers should be refuted; if he seriously maintained the alledged doctrine, whatever respect, nay, whatever admiration he generally felt for him, he would move for his expulsion; so convinced was he, that such doctrines as were stated in the passages cited, would tend, if unchecked, to the annihilation of the constitution.

Mr. *Stanley* said, there was not a statute now in being, which declared, that if any one shall maintain that any one part of the legislature shall be capable of any act of legislation without the concurrence of the other component parts, the person maintaining a doctrine so unconstitutional, shall be adjudged guilty of treason, and suffer the pains of death.

The *Secretary at War* declared he could not help smiling at the attempt to impute treason to him; his conscience told him, he was a faithful and loyal subject, with that he was satisfied, and there he would rest. He declared that he had given no opinion at all, and they must be subtle arguers indeed who could attach criminality on him for what he did not say. The very head and front of his expression had this extent, no more. He had denied that the passage would bear the interpretation which gentlemen gave it. They were at liberty certainly to give it what interpretation they pleased, and to argue upon the construction which they chose to put upon it; that, and that only was the point which he contended. (Mr. *Stanley* said, he really did not understand the Right Hon. Gentleman). "If the honourable gentleman cannot understand, if he cannot follow me, said Mr. *Windham*, I have done; I do not pretend to be able to give any man the powers of conception and understanding; let not those, however, who do not understand what I say, pretend to arraign me."

Mr. *Bar* declared, he anxiously wished to divest the matter of all obscurity. Did not, he begged to ask, the honourable gentleman distinctly state, that the passage quoted was innocent and harmless?

The *Secretary at War* said, the attack made upon him was invidious; he had not asserted that the passage quoted was harmless, or that it was not a libel; he had only said, that the passage did not appear to him to warrant the interpretation put upon it. He had heard it that day for the first time, and what followed the extract was not at the moment in his view. He was not considering what would be the proper form of government in England; he had only said, the sentiment was innocent, inasmuch as it stated, what had been, and what might be, *viz.* that the other parts were derived from monarchy, and that monarchy might subsist without them. Did gentlemen think him such a fool as to contend, that the British constitution could exist without Lords or Commons? It was the most gross and fallacious absurdity to suppose that he would waste words in attempting to support nonsense. No; he did not say the constitution could subsist, but that monarchy could subsist singly, and surely history bore him out in the opinion, though it by no means proved, nor had he the smallest idea of insinuating, that the same free government could prevail under monarchy as under a mixed constitution.

Mr. *Peck* rose to express his indignation at the explanation, or rather evasion, for so he thought it, he had just heard. Shame upon the man, said he, who could so veer and twist about. Who could deny that there had been, and might be, such a thing as an absolute monarchy? This book had applied to the British monarchy only, and those who supported it could only mean the British monarchy, they must mean that, or they must mean nothing.

Mr. *Taylor* declared that such doctrines, coming from a member of administration, gave him a bad opinion of the measures they were bringing forward. He trusted, however, that the spirit of the country would successfully oppose them. The Right. Hon. Secretary had called the Opposition unprincipled: had he forgot on which side of the house he sat three years ago, when he vociferously declaimed against the Chancellor of the Exchequer? Mr. *Taylor* declared, that to rebut the charge brought against his party, he would take care to publish the apostacy of the Secretary at War; he would shew him and the world his former speeches, in one of which he made the memorable assertion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which had now come home to himself, "that he had thrown off the mask." He had thought proper to call the opposition unprincipled; that man's principle only, it must be admitted, was good, who voted from the free sentiments of conscience and opinion, and not he who was entirely govern-
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ed by private interest. Let the Secretary at War therefore reflect on his own motives, and ask himself, if they were unprincipled?

The *Master of the Rolls* produced precedents against going into an enquiry at present: the proper way was, in his opinion, to adjourn the debate, and to consider on a future day, whether there was ground for such a prosecution or not?

Mr. *Fox* strenuously contended, that the whole of the pamphlet should be read; and declared he was convinced, from parts of it that he had read, that the house would be more confirmed of its unconstitutional and libellous tendency, when they had heard the whole of it.

The question was put for the reading of the pamphlet, which was agreed to without a division.

The pamphlet having been read,

Mr. *Sheridan* said, that he supposed, as the house had just heard the pamphlet read, it would be wholly unnecessary for him to use any arguments to prove that it was the foulest, the falsest, the dullest, and the most malicious libel that had ever come under the cognizance of the Commons of Great Britain. The author was not content with rashly defaming the constitution, and outraging its principles; but he obviously wished to attribute every departure from both to the conduct of the Whigs. In addition to the sentiments which seemed to pervade the house on the reading of the libellous paragraph that first attracted their attention, the reading had disclosed nothing new, but the history of the constitution, in which it seemed that administration intended, as if not content with exhibiting their new converts and allies to the world in the light of apostates, to shew that all their former life had been one continued system of hypocrisy.

It would, he said be idle in him to enter into a detail of the various objectionable passages in the book, which, so far from extenuating, heightened and aggravated the criminality of the leading paragraph. Should it be urged, that it required time to deliberate, he would not press a motion that night to a decision, but content himself with announcing the pamphlet to be a libel, and calling on the house at a future day to apply a punishment for it. If the author was a man of importance enough he ought to be impeached; though when it was considered that he was the mouth-piece of government, and chairman of those associations which originated and circulated those alarms about French principles, that had contributed so much to the unhappy state in which the country stood at that moment, he could not be considered in a light point

point of view. The libel was unquestionably much more deserving of impeachment than that which Sacheverel wrote, and for which he was impeached. The motion he intended to make, he would therefore put into the words used on the case of Sacheverel, viz.

“ That the said pamphlet is a malicious, scandalous, and seditious libel, containing matter tending to create jealousies and divisions among his Majesty's subjects ; to alienate their affections from our present form of government, as established in King, Lords, and Commons ; and to subvert the true principles of our free Constitution ; and that the said pamphlet is a high breach of the privileges of this House.”

The *Master of the Rolls* said, he was not ready to give an opinion on the pamphlet ; he was however convinced of what he had before said, that the reading the pamphlet would not have the effect of completely satisfying the minds of the house ; and it would ill become them, on such grounds as the bare reading of it by the officer of the house afforded, to found so very important and grave a resolution. He would not then say a syllable as to the merit or demerit of the pamphlet ; but own, that the paragraph did not in the reading of it, sound entirely constitutional. The only part, however, for consideration was, the passage or extract complained of ; the rest was only to be considered as a qualification of it ; and the house was not at liberty, in discussing the subject, to talk of any particular gentleman as the author of it ; as it did not appear, upon the face of it, who was the author. If the words he had heard read were not qualified by context, with the parts antecedent or subsequent, he would be the first to vote a censure. If the tenor of it was to assert, that the king could govern without Lords or Commons, the author should be severely censured, though not to the extent menaced by the honourable gentleman who made the motion. To determine that any censure at all was or was not due, it was absolutely necessary for him to read the pamphlet. He would therefore move, “ That the debate be postponed to Thursday.”

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* declared he concurred in opinion with his learned friend who had just sat down, and he concurred on the same grounds. If it was clearly the tendency of the pamphlet to inculcate such doctrines as those imputed to it, he would not hesitate to say that the house ought to treat it with censure and reprobation. If it asserted that the King could not govern without the other two branches of the constitution, there could be in that house but one voice upon
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the matter, and that the voice of indignation against the author : or if the author declared that it was possible for the monarchical part of the constitution to survive the two other branches, with constitutional liberty, he would not hesitate to pronounce his doctrine a gross libel ; but when it appeared that there were many passages in the pamphlet, which stated the impossibility of the king's exercising the functions of government without the co-operation of the other parts, it would surely be worth the while of the house to pause and consider whether, on taking the whole of the book together, there would be ground enough to warrant a prosecution. If gentlemen had been, as they might have been, in possession of the book for a month past, it was rather hard in their imperial zeal for all branches of the constitution, that they could not set apart a single day to bring the motion forward, but that which was appointed for the commitment of the Bill for the preservation of the sovereign. The Chancellor of the Exchequer thought, that, upon the whole, the house could not, with justice either to itself or the authors of the pamphlet, decide on it directly. He would therefore second the motion of his learned friend.

Mr. *Erskine* said, he should have been surprised at hearing a proposal come from any member, who had heard the pamphlet read, and had valued the privilege of the house, to postpone the deliberation ; but it struck him as singular indeed, that a gentleman so learned in the law as the Master of the Rolls, could not make up his mind upon the tendency of what the house had heard ; a gentleman who, from his practice, was in the daily habit of making up his mind upon subjects infinitely more intricate than the present. He would not charge that gentleman with indolence or inattention to his duty in that house ; but he could not help saying, that a former Master of the Rolls, Sir Joseph Jekyll, had not required time to make up his mind on the case of doctor Sacheverell, which was by no means a plainer case than the present : it had come forward, and, on reading the publication, moved the impeachment of its author. He was surprised that the learned gentleman should not have had time to make up his mind on the present occasion.

The question was, whether the paragraph, which had been originally complained of, was or was not a libel upon the House of Commons ? and he admitted that, in the examining the pamphlet, the intention of the author should be taken altogether. When he heard the paragraph alluded to read, he formed an opinion, exactly as a learned gentleman had stated his

his to be, *viz.* that it would be difficult indeed for any context to explain the meaning, so as to manifest the intention of the author to be innocent; so much however did he with that an opportunity of explaining it might present itself, that he had attended patiently to the reading of the whole book, and having done so, he must declare it to be, in his opinion, a daring and atrocious libel? Any man who would maintain a contrary proposition, he had no scruple to pronounce ignorant of the laws of the land. If other members had not attended to it, if, from indolence, or from a negligent disposition, they had slept upon their posts, it was their own fault; they deserted their duty, and betrayed their constituents, by making their own negligence an excuse for not protecting the honour of the house. How was it possible that a man so familiar with professional matters as the Master of the Rolls should be ignorant of the nature of such a pamphlet as that which the house had heard read? How could he for a moment doubt whether it was a libel on that house, and on the Revolution of 1688? So fully was his own mind, Mr. Erskine said, made up on the subject, that he would not hesitate, even on the instant to declare, that were he a juror, sworn to try the author, he would, without going out of court, pronounce him guilty. He was surprised that gentlemen felt any difficulty upon a point so plain and palpable. Gentlemen should beware how they indulged their inclinations to screen men who traduced the principles of the revolution, in which the people of this country gloried, and so justly gloried. They should recollect, that action produced reaction. The people of this country felt the insults that had been so often offered to them. They were proceeding to act as their ancestors did; and if that house, in its intemperance and folly, should carelessly pass these insults on the Revolution, the consequences would be dreadful, and more especially as they were proceeding with Bills founded on principles utterly subversive of every thing for which the Revolution was dear to the people. Such libels which the authors conceived to be sanctioned by government, occasioned answers in reply; this action and reaction naturally and necessarily produced consequences that kept the public in a ferment; they excited that bitterness and asperity of feeling in the country that occasioned that detestable and damnable system of pretended plots without doors and of projects against the liberties of Englishmen within, that tended to undermine the foundation of social order, and alienated the affections of the people from the government. He called to the recol-

lection of ministers the circumstances and conduct that brought Charge I. to the block, and cautioned them to beware how they refused to pay due deference to the petitions of the people.

The author of the pamphlet had spoken contemptuously of the revolution; he had stated it as a measure brought about by plots and conspiracies. He had said, that it was brought about by dividing men into different classes. He had represented the people of England then to be, what such miserable shallow politicians as the author wished to make them at present, devoid of pensions, douceurs, and bribes; men capable of relishing the sentiments of despotism to serve the purpose of certain leaders. To make those of high rank league together, to reprobate the principles of liberty. The author of the pamphlet had traduced the proceedings of those who put the crown on the head of the house of Brunswick, that crown worn by his Majesty. What this ignorant man meant was for the house, by their determination upon his publication to declare. This had been declared by a former House of Commons in the case of Doctor Sacheverel. The doctrine of that person was voted to be scandalous and libellous against the sovereign then upon the throne, and against the Protestant succession, as by law established. That important event, an event so interesting and so advantageous to every Englishman, the author of this book said was vulgarly called a revolution, and was only called so by whigs who waited for another, and therefore was not at this time to be spoken of as a revolution. Was this language to be tolerated by a House of Commons that pretended to have any esteem for the principles of that revolution? The house ought to be very cautious how they suffered slanders on that revolution to pass unnoticed. The people of England were so much, and thank God! so firmly attached to the principles then established, that he was convinced they were determined to live or die under those principles. He was one of that description; and he hoped he should be found among the number of those who would shew, if necessary, not by words, but by acts, that they would die before they would submit to any attempt to make a king absolute in England. It had been said that the doctrine, that a monarchy might exist without a Parliament, might apply to some other monarchy, and not of necessity to our monarchy. Would any man say upon his honour, that he believed that to be the intention of the author of the pamphlet? Would any man in that house stand up and say, that he wished the debate of this question to be adjourned, in order

order to make up his mind upon that point? Would the house delay its decision upon such a question as that, and shew a partiality for those who libelled the constitution, while they themselves were abetting and supporting his Majesty's ministers in hurrying through the house two Bills that had a tendency to destroy the principles of the constitution; and that at a time too, when they themselves knew the sentiments of the people were against the Bills, about to be passed? When they knew that, with all the ardour which belonged to the affection, and which he trusted in God would ever be the pride and glory of their hearts, they loved the revolution of 1688, and the principles which were then established, would they take advantage of the temporary circumstance of an insult offered to his Majesty, and the expressions of indignation which the people uttered upon that occasion, and pretend to say, that what they then expressed amounted to an acquiescence in the principles which ministers at this time maintained? If they did, he must tell them, that they would thereby render his Majesty's life precarious, and the government insecure. He would maintain, that if ministers expected to be supported in such principles by the people, they would be deceived in the sequel. They would find that the people of England detest such principles; that the voice of the people was against them was evident, (here there was a cry of *No such thing*, from the opposite side). Sure he was, he said, that if such measures be persisted in, the people would rise against them; and then ministers would, he had no doubt, lay hold of some subterfuge, and endeavour to sneak out of their difficulty, as they had done on other occasions. He knew the press would be set to work to defend them in the usual way, and they would no doubt be treated with another pamphlet from the ingenious author of that under consideration. What a glorious representation of the people of England would that house appear to be, if they passed by a pamphlet which had been read to them that night, in which they were represented only as a mere counsel for the crown, and that in this consisted their greatest utility; that all the vigour and energy which they were said to possess, as an emanation from the people, was a mere chimera; for such was the object of the author in the publication of his book, a book brought forward to support the principles of kingly government, which, thank God, Englishmen got rid of; and they must get rid of it again, if men of high rank and station should, with arms in their hands, attempt to establish it against the public voice, as had more than once been hinted.

Mr. Erskine said, the debate of that night, and what had lately happened, would have convinced him, if he had stood in need of conviction, how inscrutable the ways of providence were: they seemed always intended to counteract the prognostics of men, in order to teach us prudence and patience. The higher orders of the people in this country, he had once thought had resolved to carry on the detestable doctrine contained in the book before the house, and the principles of the Bills depending, so that the people would have no hope but in the desecrate alternative of either submitting to slavery, or attempting: removed by; that all the elements of society would be destroyed. He had God, his apprehension on that point at an end from the manner in which many of the highest of the most illustrious among the cause of liberty; and, by their conduct, had given the lie direct to the many insinuations that had gone forth against them. That proved that there were in the country men of high character, who espoused the cause of liberty and of the people, and who were determined to support it at the hazard and the peril of their lives. What would be the consequence? The people would return to the state of affliction to the legislature. If unfortunately their efforts should fail, and the people's rights should be disregarded, he would then say, in the language of a right honourable gentleman* who was no longer a member of that house, "When you put the sovereign against the people, they will cast your sovereignty in your face: nobody will be argued into slavery."

The author of the pamphlet under consideration, Mr. Erskine observed, was a member of the law; but he did not he said, choose to treat him as a lawyer, and therefore he should not state the book as the work of Mr. Reeves, but take it as if it had been the work of any other person of whom he had previously known nothing. He should only say, that the house should be aware how they gave the book their *imprimatur*. If they voted that the book was no libel, it would appear clear to the public they did so, because it was supposed to be in favour of the crown against the rights of the people: and here he must tell the Attorney General, of whose ability, integrity, and candour, no man, he said, could entertain an higher opinion, that if he went into the Court of King's Bench with this book, and called for the verdict of a jury on it, they would not desire that time to deliberate upon it which the

* Mr. Burke.

house of Commons seemed to wish. He concluded with moving an amendment, "That the debate be adjourned till Thursday following."

The *Master of the Rolls* said, that if he was in the situation of a jurymen, he would desire the pamphlet to be put into his hands, in order that he might be able to judge of its tendency from his own deliberate perusal of the contents, and according to his judgment formed after mature consideration. At present he could give no opinion, from having only heard it once read; he therefore thought that a longer delay ought to take place before the house came to a decision.

Mr. *Serjeant Aldon* said, he could by no means concur in the amendment which had been proposed, because the time proposed by the amendment was too short to enable any gentleman to form an opinion upon the subject; he was among those who entertained doubts as to the real intention of the author; he declared, he said this the more readily, as in the amendment itself it was admitted that some ought to be allowed. With regard to the pamphlet in question, at least that part of it which had been originally complained of, he had no doubt of its being a libel on that house. He took notice of the doctrine of the Secretary at War, and said he differed from him totally. He could not admit that it was historically correct, even that the monarchy of this country was at any time antecedent to its constitution. He also denied, and he defied any one to prove, that the monarch could carry on the government without the great council of the nation; and he rejected with disdain the idea that the monarch of this country could carry on the government without the aid of parliament. It was a doctrine not to be tolerated for a single moment; and he believed it would be difficult for any context to explain, in the author's favour, the paragraph complained of. As the author's intention was, however, to be judged of from the whole book, he thought that it would be a mockery to adjourn the debate until the next day. It would be better to decide at once, than to give only those few hours to deliberate upon the matter in question. He must, he said, repeat, that he wished the subject had not been brought forward, when other business of more pressing importance stood for the discussion of the day.

Mr. *Fox* said, the assertion that he had any wish to prevent the house from fully discussing the measure alluded to was altogether without foundation. That he was desirous by every means to delay that measure, and to give time for the house and the country to understand it, was indisputably true.

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Why had he that wish? Because the sense of the country, as far as it had been yet collected, was against them in a manner that almost amounted to unanimity, and therefore he thought they ought not to be hastily hurried through the house. He need not, he said, remind the house of the proceeding at Westminster on a former occasion, when he stated in his place what had been the unanimous sense of the Meeting in Palace Yard, with respect to the two alarming Bills pending in Parliament. He was then, with an air of triumphant confidence, told to wait the result of parochial meetings, and of meetings called by the Sheriffs. He thanked gentlemen for having appealed to that criterion. The result of those meetings was at this time known. It had been asked why he had not brought on the consideration of the pamphlet in question before? He did not know whether he should have brought it on at all. He conceived that dangerous notions might be stated in a publication, and that yet it might not be of consequence enough to warrant a prosecution of the author. When, however, such a publication as the present was brought forward, it was incumbent on the house to shew that they were not parties to libels upon the constitution, nor the patrons of those by whom such libels were circulated. The existence of the Bills formed another ground why the publication then before the house should not be passed by; the principles of this pamphlet and of the Bills before the house were, in his opinion, materially and closely connected: if it was found that arbitrary doctrines were recommended in the pamphlet, and that arbitrary measures were in the course of being adopted by ministers, it of consequence followed, that the house should not subscribe to the opinion of the right honourable Secretary of War, that the passage in the pamphlet which had been particularly referred to, was apparently innocent. The learned gentleman (Mr. Adair) admitted the publication to be a libel on the constitution, and yet he avowed himself an advocate for delay. Why did he not narrow his condemnation to the doctrines contained in that passage, and pronounce upon them, which could require no time to decide upon. Notwithstanding all the partiality of ministers for arbitrary power, he did not believe that many of their advocates would be found to come forward to support those doctrines. A delay then was on their part desirable, in order that they might concert what defence could be set up for the passage, in all probability the production of one of their own agents. Was this exceptionable passage, he would ask, so long, was it so doubtful, that, after having heard it once read, the house could have any hesitation

tation with respect to its tendency? Did ministers wish for the delay of a few days, in order to give notice to the author of the libel to get out of the way? Did they wish for time in their distressed situation, in order to reconcile, by some strain of construction, some contortion and twisting of the sense of other parts of the pamphlet, this defence of the passage with the declaration set up by the right honourable the Secretary at War, that it was perfectly innocent? It was, Mr. Fox declared, a libel of a more dangerous nature, and a worse tendency, than any that had been issued by the Constitutional and Corresponding Societies. It was not difficult, however, to perceive the tenderness of ministers for this libeller on the House of Commons, nor to penetrate into the motives of their conduct; and it was surely a bad omen for the country, that while such dispositions were manifested, it should be urged, that not a moment was to be lost in coming to a decision on Bills, which, under the pretence of giving greater security to his Majesty's person, were, in reality, calculated to strengthen the hands of government, and overturn the privileges of the constitution.

The *Attorney General* said it did not become him to give any opinion as to the nature of the pamphlet, but to receive the instructions of the House. On a principle of justice to the unknown individual, and from regard to their own dignity, he must, however, vote for the adjournment of the question. That House was the grand inquest of the nation. It had been found, in former instances of complaints sent from the House, that a jury, after a long investigation of the facts charged, differed in opinion and acquitted the party prosecuted. After all the attention which he had given to the pamphlet, he could not, Mr. Attorney General said, if he was called upon on the sudden, give an opinion whether he should think it advisable to prosecute or not. Certain persons, he observed, seemed to have just found out the value of the Bill of Rights, which for three years they had been disposed to treat as a Bill of Wrongs. It was contended, that if the two Bills were suffered to pass, they would endanger the person and government of the Sovereign. In his opinion they went to secure both. If such a difference of sentiment existed, on which the public mind was extremely agitated, it was fit that the discussion should not be postponed for a moment, and that either, as gentlemen asserted on the other side, the peace of the country should be restored by the rejection of those Bills, or, as he thought, it should be secured and set at rest by their adoption.

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Mr. *Sheridan* said, he was ready to decline pressing for hasty decision, and even to give time for the longest delay. When the honourable and learned gentleman professed so much anxiety to set at rest the public mind, by a speedy discussion of the Bills, he believed, he felt reason for his haste, viz. the dread of public opinion.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he rose at that moment to answer two purposes, partly with a view from what had been said that night, and partly to take an opportunity of giving a notice. Considering the unexampled misrepresentation which gentlemen had taken pains to make of the Bills before the House, those who thought as he did respecting these Bills, or their absolute necessity, would feel it a duty which they owed their country, to look forward to the moment of their discussion, when an explanation should be made of the shameful misrepresentation that had been so industriously circulated respecting them. Some gentlemen assumed to themselves a certainty of success with the public, in consequence of their own misrepresentations, which, when they came to be exposed, would check their daring projects, and damp their sanguine hopes and premature triumph. If they would waive the effect of misrepresentation, and collect the sense of the people from their real sentiments, he should not be afraid to meet them, and to argue on the popularity of the two Bills before the House. He meant the sense of the people, as it was fairly called for, and candidly taken: on that ground he would debate the question. In stating the opinion of the people, it was necessary to ask, what was the opinion of those who were unbiassed? That opinion was only to be discovered by referring to the means that had been made use of to obtain their opinion; and again by the style which they had adopted in their petitions; in the language which had been used by them, it was observable the one party had been infinitely more constitutional in their expressions than the other. In his opinion, the *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, the gentlemen on the other side would feel less ground of exultation, if they weighed the effects of that misrepresentation, against the effect which the naked fact had produced on the plain sense and unperverted feelings of the people, in the more distant parts of the country, of which ample testimonies were to be found in the numerous addresses, calling upon that House to adopt additional measures for the security of the Sovereign and the government. It was also to be remarked that the degree of comparative attention to be given to these petitions, was not to be governed by the number of signatures

signatures to petitions, but by what those who signed them know of the circumstances that had caused them. In that way only could the House ascertain how far these petitions spoke the general sense of the people. How far these petitions had been obtained by calumny, by fraud, by artifice, and by shameful and scandalous misrepresentations, was another, and scarcely a less necessary subject of enquiry. From what he knew of the circumstances, from the inflammatory language that had been held out at public meetings, he was at liberty to judge of them by that language, which language had indeed been reverberated in some of the petitions themselves. The House would then judge whether it was possible for the people who had subscribed these petitions to have agreed to them through a false medium. Without entering into the discussion at present he must beg of gentlemen not to be too ready to take it for granted, that what the House had heard that day, was to be considered as the sense of the people; a conclusion as distant from truth, as certain gentlemen had been out of the course of fair dealing in their means of procuring these petitions. Under that state of the circumstances he had a fair ground to meet the discussion; he was anxious, therefore, as it was most convenient to the right honourable gentleman, that it should be discussed on the question of the speaker leaving the chair, after the call of the House, and to discuss the subject in the way gentlemen had found out lately that they could best discuss them. When the question of the second reading of one of the Bills was proposed, gentlemen, he observed, had declined it, and reserved themselves, as they said, for the Committee; although, when they moved for the call of the House, they alledged it would be almost treason against the constitution not to oppose the Bills in every stage. He said, he mentioned these matters collaterally in order to shew that the end of the gentlemen to whom he alluded was nothing but delay. For the reasons he had given he wished to avoid delay; and, because they could not too soon decide whether these Bills were for the extinction of liberty, or for the salvation of the constitution, he should wish to bring forward the discussion as early as possible. He would not at that hour go into either of the Bills. He therefore gave notice, that, on Wednesday, the 25th, he proposed going into a Committee of the Bill that was to be committed on that day; and that, after the call, he should propose to go into the Bill against seditious meetings.

Mr. Grey said, that, considering the humiliating and in fact the mortifying situation into which the minister had brought

himself, he did not wonder at the sort of language he had held. He had long since remarked the tones of the right honourable gentleman were loud in proportion as his situation was embarrassed. When the right honourable gentleman, however, had recourse to his recollection, he ought to be aware of misrepresenting what had occurred upon former occasions. Hence we see that part of the right honourable gentleman's observations were directed particularly at him, when, on a former night, it had been stated, that by the call of the House taking place, every gentleman would at least have it in his power to deliver his sentiments on the third reading of the Bill. He had acquiesced in that idea; but at the same time he had never given up the intention of watching and debating on every stage of the Bill, instead of confining the debate to the second or third reading, or to any one particular stage. The honourable gentleman had asked, though not with any degree of candour, why those on the same side of the House with him had not chosen to debate the principle of the Bill on the second reading? The reasons why he did not debate it that day were so fairly and distinctly stated at the time, that he was surprised that such a want of candour on the part of the honourable gentleman made it necessary for him to repeat them: they were, that the debate had been postponed that day from the unavoidable absence of two honourable friends of his (Messrs. Erskine and Sheridan) and not from any desire to avoid a discussion of the principle of the Bill. It had been said, that delay in proceeding on this Bill was his object, and that of his friends: for his own part, in one sense, he had no hesitation to declare that delay was certainly his object, because he must think that every delay that could be given to such a Bill, was so much done for the good of the people of England. He denied, however, in the most unequivocal terms, the charge of misrepresentation brought against him and his friends, and could retort it with much greater truth upon the honourable gentleman. At the same time that he avowed delay to be an object with him, he must declare, upon his honour, that it was not the object of that night's debate, nor had he the least previous knowledge of such a discussion coming on. If any exertions of his could delay the passing of these Bills for a day, he must take to himself the credit of gaining a day for his country in the enjoyment of the rights and liberties of his fellow subjects; and if the question was again brought on the next day, so much was he of that opinion, that he trusted some gentleman or other would move an adjournment upon it.

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With regard to misrepresentation without doors, Mr. Grey said, that he and his friends never held language against the Bills out of doors different from what they had spoken within: they had always said what they would persist in saying as often as opportunity offered, let it be when and where it would, that it was a most daring invasion on the liberties of the people, and a gross violation of the Bill of Rights. And notwithstanding the right honourable gentleman's high tone and great hurry to have these Bills passed, he would tell him to his face, that he knew he would not dare to pass them in their present form: he could not do it; the House never would allow it: the country never would submit to it. The right honourable gentleman wished the Bill to go into a Committee, that the most obnoxious parts of it might be left out; and feeling the horror which the appearance of this Bill had excited in the House, and the dismay and discontent it had roused without doors, he came forward, desiring the House to wait till it had gone through the Committee, till all the abominable clauses were struck out of the Bill, and then he would tell them that all that had been said of it was misrepresentation. Mr. Grey said, he could pledge himself to the house and to the country, that this would be the case; but that gentlemen would not be seduced by such arts, nor duped by such fallacy. Such was the sort of misrepresentation which the honourable gentleman was guilty of, though he had not the courage to acknowledge the truth; the loud tones of the honourable gentleman convinced him he was right in saying so, as he had always heard him talk in his highest strains when least supported by truth or argument. He had known him too long to be unacquainted with his habits; and he was sure the public had discovered them also; whatever alterations the Bill might undergo, the Committee ought not, and would not, let them be ascribed to this right honourable Gentleman's wisdom, but to the spirit of the people, who, roused by the alarming apprehensions which his system had excited had determined no longer to remain blind or dormant, when every thing dear to them was at stake.

Mr. *Wilberforce* said, if he entertained the same opinions which the Hon. Gentleman who had just sat down had declared he did, if he thought the Bills pregnant with ruin to the constitution, he should feel himself happy at any alteration which the Committee might make in them; but the Hon. Gentleman, by avowing the contrary, had given great reason to suspect, that, upon this occasion, he was actuated rather by personal animosity, than by any regard to his country. View-

ing the present posture of affairs in the light he did, some restrictive measures appeared to him to be highly necessary; at the same time, he was ready to confess, that no more ought to be done than the necessity of the case called for. If any gentleman could satisfy him that the constitution could be preserved from the dangers which threatened it; by regulations less strong than those provided by the Bills, he would, with pleasure, concur in adopting them; because while he wished to maintain the constitution on the one hand, so, on the other, he wished to put the liberties of the subject as little in danger as possible.

Mr. Curwen said, he was not surprised at the Right Hon. Gentleman's heat and intemperance of language that night; it might indeed be a matter of satisfaction if there could be any reason to hope that the severe mortification which the Right Honourable Gentleman had experienced, would cure him of his deep designs against the liberties of his country. Not being warranted from his knowledge of his character, and the experience of the uniform system of his policy, to form any such expectation, he felt himself, on the present occasion, called upon, by his public duty, to expose his views and principles to the nation at large. He was convinced that such was his rooted design to overturn the constitution, and his favourite system of encroaching on the rights of the people, that, though he should be forced to desist without having accomplished his present purpose, he would again renew the attempt. He had himself taken every means to call for the sense of the country on the present measures. He had sent copies of the Bills into every quarter, and invited all possible discussion with respect to their tendency: if the Bills passed, he was convinced there would no longer exist any security either for their rights or their property. He meant to appeal to an honourable secretary (Mr. Dundas), whom he did not see in his place, and who had declared, that if the measures did not meet the wish of the people, they ought not to pass. "Let us not, then," said Mr. Curwen, "accuse ourselves of negligence in our duty: let us pause till we know the sentiments of our constituents. I wish only the principles of the Right Hon. Gentleman to be appreciated from his actions. Let those actions be viewed in their true colours. The period of his administration will be found to be the most calamitous that ever occurred in the country. I am convinced, that his measures have laid the foundation of calamities which may lead to the most fatal consequences, and which the country will long have cause to deplore, Mr. Curwen concluded by giving notice that next day

he would move for a week's delay, in order to allow time for the country to express its sense with respect to the Bills.

The question for adjourning the consideration of the pamphlet till Thursday then passed in the affirmative, without a division.

MOTION FOR PEACE.

Mr. Grey gave notice, that on Monday, the 30th, he should bring forward a motion, tending to a pacification with the present government of France.

THE TREASON BILL.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* moved, that the order of the day, for the Committee upon a Bill for the greater security of his majesty's person, &c. be discharged. He then moved that the Committee be appointed for Wednesday the 25th.

Mr. Fox said, he felt himself called upon by the expression of the Right Hon. Gen. who had asserted, that the voice of the people had not been fairly taken, and that delays were made for the express purposes of misrepresentation. How was this proved? He applied, it was true, for delay: was that a proof of misrepresentation? Certainly not. It was uniformly the wish of those who misrepresented facts and opinions to hasten precipitately to their object. They must know that every hour would unveil some part of the delusion, would demolish some part of the artifice. He wished for the delay, because it appeared that these Bills were most reprobated where they were best known, and that they met with an equivocal approval only where their merits had not been discussed. The ample discussion of the Sedition Bill, as it was termed, had afforded ministers an opportunity of refuting every misrepresentation. Did it however appear that their explanations had satisfied the country? By no means. The Right Hon. Gentleman expressed a wish for the further discussion of the Bills, and a confidence in the effect of that discussion. Had he not had an opportunity of discussing them; and had he not seen and felt that the spirit of the country rose with the debate? If such had not been the case, he should have been mortified and hurt. The Right Hon. Gentleman had charged him with artifice and misrepresentation: he did not practice any. He had stated nothing without doors that he had not stated within: nothing that was not consonant with his sincere opinion, if he expressed himself in strong terms without doors, he had spoken with equal ardour and vehemence within those walls. His opinion on the Bills, was precisely what he had declared it to be, that they re-

peaked

pealed the Bill of Rights, and subverted the constitution of the country. He had no recourse to indirect means; nor did he, as the Right Honourable Gentleman had done, exert his influence by under agents. He courted public discussion, being well assured, that the more the principle was discussed, the more general would be the odium and detestation with which it would be regarded. He did not wish to see the Bills altered or amended; he rather hoped they might pass in their present form, because, as the attack was to be made upon the rights and liberties of the nation, he wished that attack should be open, broad, and intelligible to the people at large. He wished the Bills to be pushed fairly forward, with all their force, that the people might feel and see the full extent of the danger that invaded them; and that the attack, which the enemies of the country had meditated, should not steal upon them by surprise, and by gradation sap and undermine them. He did not wish the poison of these Bills to be sweetened to their palates, but that the people should be prepared and cautioned against the dreadful draught. "I would not vote for these Bills (say the members to their constituents) if I could foresee the intended mischief. What attention however had the Right Hon. Gentleman paid to public opinion? Where is his charge of misrepresentation? Has he heard the voice of the country? Has he heard the voice of Westminster? Of the Common Hall of London? Of the country of Middlesex?"

If indeed the opinion of the majority were in favour of these Bills, if he could believe it possible that the people of this country should be so degraded and abject as to prefer slavery to liberty, or to countenance these Bills, with any thing like their approbation; if they did not so generally express their abhorrence of them, as to shew that they yet retained an unabating attachment to the constitution of their ancestors; he could only say, that he could no longer be a profitable servant of the people. He might sit down in silence, and enjoy, in the tranquillity of private life, the society of his friends; but he could not, with the feelings he possessed, be a profitable servant of the people. If, on the contrary, the people of England were, as he truly believed them to be, decidedly against these Bills; not a mere concerted majority, but the great mass of the people, against them; then, undoubtedly, they had a right to demand his services, and he should hold himself bound to obey the call. He had a right to hope and expect that these Bills, which positively repealed the Bill of Rights, and cut up the whole of the constitution by the roots, by changing our limited monarchy into

into an absolute despotism, would not be enacted by parliament against the declared sense of the great majority of the people. If, however, ministers, so resolute on their spirit of destruction, were determined, by means of the corrupt influence which they possessed in the two houses of parliament, to pass the Bills in violent opposition to the declared sense of the people, and they should be put into force, and become a practical part of the government, he was ready to avow, in the ancient language of the constitution, and in the principles of the revolution, that however he might go into solitude to suffer his new condition with patience, if his opinion were asked by the people, as to their obedience, he should say that it was no longer a question of morality and duty, but of prudence. It would indeed be a case of extremity alone which could justify resistance, and the only question would be, whether that resistance was prudent? He was aware that these words were liable to misconstruction, and he knew that ministers were adepts in the art of misrepresentation; but a public man must not shrink in times of danger from strong expressions, because they might be misconstrued, or misrepresented. What he said, he said deliberately; and it was for the authors and abettors of the Bills to consider whether they would hurry the parliament to the passing of them, before it could be ascertained whether they had the sense of the people with them or not. With regard to the amendments that might be made in the Committee, he repeated what he had said before on the subject, that no mending could qualify this attack on the constitution. He repeated it, the poison might be concealed, it might be made more palatable, and it would be so much the worse. If, however, the constitution was to be violated, he wished that the people might see the attack in all its glaring, open treason, that they might be roused to its defence. He certainly, therefore should not lend himself to qualify the atrocious wickedness of these Bills. Mr. Fox concluded with moving to adjourn the debate till Wednesday fortnight.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he did not rise to follow the Right Hon. Gentleman through the whole of his speech; but there were some passages in it which, consistently with his duty as a member of parliament, with his feelings as a man, with his attachment to his sovereign, and his veneration for the constitution, he could not hear, without rising instantly to express his horror and indignation at them. The Rt. Hon. Gent. he observed, had made a bold, broad, and unqualified declaration, that if his arguments and his measures did not prevent the
passing

passing of Bills, which a great majority of the house conceived to be necessary for the security of the person of the sovereign, and the preservation of the rights of the people, he will have recourse to different means of opposition. He has avowed his intention of setting up his own arguments in opposition to the authority of the legislature. He has said, that if he is asked his advice, he will put the propriety of resistance only on the question of prudence; without advert- ing whether the consequences of this advice may be followed by the penalties of treason, and the danger of convulsion, thus openly advising an appeal to the sword, which must either consign its authors to the vengeance of the violated law, or involve the country in anarchy and bloodshed." The right honourable gentleman, the Chancellor of the Exchequer said, had taken care not to be mis-quoted; happily for the country, this declaration of his principles was too clear to admit of a doubt. He moved to postpone the Committee until Wednesday, December 2. With all the horror he felt at such language, he was glad the right honourable gentleman had been so unreserved and explicit. The House and the country would judge of that gentleman's conduct from his own language; they might see the extent of his veneration for the constitution, and of his respect for parliament, when, in violation of his duty, in defiance of legal punishment, he could bring himself to utter such sentiments. He was glad the right honourable gentleman had made that avowal, because he hoped it would warn all the true friends of the constitution to rally round it for its defence. He would not enter into a discussion of the abstract right of resistance, or what degree of oppression on that part of the government, would set the people free from their allegiance; he would only call to their recollection that the principles of those Bills, upon which the right honourable gentleman had ventured such language, had met with the approbation of a large majority of the House, and he trusted that majority had not forgot what was due to themselves and their country. He hoped they would shew the right honourable gentlemen, that they had not lost the spirit of their ancestors, which had been so frequently referred to; and that if they were driven by treason to the hard necessity of defending the constitution by force, that they would act with that irresistible energy which such a crime would necessarily excite in a loyal assembly. The power of the law of England, he trusted, would be sufficient to defeat the machinations of all who risked such dangerous doctrines, and to punish treason wherever it might be found. Should the law fail, all true

true friends to the constitution must fight under its banner, and shew as much vigour in a good cause as desperate men could do in a bad one. They must hazard, if necessary, their lives, their fortunes, and every thing held dear, to rescue themselves from that anarchy, that wretchedness, into which such unremitting efforts were made to plunge the country.

Mr. Fox said in explanation, "the right honourable gentleman's tale for misrepresentation was neither unknown to him nor to the house, I rise to re-state my expression, but not to retract one word of what I have said. Let the words be taken down at the table; if they express the sentiments of an honest Englishman, they are those sentiments for which our forefathers shed their blood, and upon which the revolution was founded: but let me not be mistaken. The case I put was, that these Bills might be passed by a corrupt majority of parliament, contrary to the opinion and sentiments of the great body of the nation. If the majority of the people approve of these Bills, I will not be the person to inflame their minds, and stir them up to rebellion; but if, in the general opinion of the country, it is conceived, that these Bills attack the fundamental principles of our constitution, I then maintain, that the propriety of resistance, instead of remaining any longer a question of morality, will become merely a question of prudence. I may be told that these are strong words; but strong measures require strong words. I will not submit to arbitrary power, while there remains any alternative to vindicate my freedom.

The *Secretary at War* said, the explanation took nothing from the dangerous tendency of the original declaration. The meaning was obviously that which had been given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It was, that the right honourable gentleman would advise the people, whenever they were strong enough, to resist the execution of the law. The right honourable gentleman rested on no majority, but the *majority of force*. The honourable gentleman had brought the matter to a crisis; and it was now verging to that point to which, in his opinion, it had long tended. It was alarming to the country, but they must see it: the danger ought to be known to them; and if they did not see the dreadful precipice near which they stood, in his opinion they were lost for ever. At least they had a fair warning: they now knew from the unequivocal declarations of the honourable gentleman, what lengths would be justified: they had time to prepare against the danger, and prepare for their safety; but he would not wish for a dishonourable safety; not one gained by flight and

pusillanimity, but in manly fortitude to meet the danger. In that case, the right hon. gentleman would find that ministers were determined to exert a vigour more than law. (A loud cry of *Hear! Hear!* and "*take down his words*") Mr. Windham repeated the words, "that they were ready to exert a *vigour* more than *law*," as exercised in ordinary times and under common circumstances. Times and circumstances would then require stronger laws, and the exertion of more efficacious means to put those laws in execution. He deprecated the idea of an *abject mind* as much as the right honourable gentleman; and therefore it was that ministers, whatever strength and daring was opposed to them, would be able, he trusted, to meet it with an equal degree of strength and combination.

Mr. *Hardinge* said, that he agreed with Mr. Fox, and was ready then as he could ever be to vote a censure of the words, but that he was desirous of the adjournment proposed by the Master of the Rolls, and for two reasons. First, because it was not of such pressure to act immediately in judgement upon this libel, as it was to act immediately upon the Bill for the safety of the King's person; and in the next place, because though he was perfectly sure *the words* had received no explanation that could alter the sense of them, or make it less criminal. It would be another question whether censure was due to the *writer of them*, or how far it should extend; and it was necessary to determine that question by a more accurate examination of the whole work. This was a reason for *some* adjournment, and what he had said before convinced him that it should be distant enough to let in the discussion of the Bill, that was the order of the day.

Mr. *Alderman Newnham* said, that gentlemen seemed to take it for granted, that at the public meetings alluded to by the right honourable gentleman, who had spoken last but one, nothing but cool deliberate discussion had taken place at each of them; the direct reverse had been the case most notoriously. With respect to the Common Hall, the crowd was so great, and the clamour so incessant, that it was utterly impossible to decide what were the sentiments of the majority. Many had assented to the proceedings without ever even knowing what the resolutions were for which they voted. Guildhall, it was well known, was a long and extensive building; his voice could not reach above half its extent; and when he attempted to speak, they would not hear him; nay, even his own constituents would not hear Mr. *Lushington*, who was so able a speaker. The same riotous conduct, he said, had likewise taken place at the *Middlesex* meeting, where

where one of the representatives of the county (Mr. Mainwaring) had to complain of a similar want of attention.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, he could refer the worthy Alderman for an answer to the right honourable gentleman, who, in 1784, had stated to his right honourable friend what must be his situation of degradation with regard to his constituents, when they refused to listen to his sentiments. After what had fallen from the hon. Chancellor of the Exchequer, he declared he had imagined that nothing more violent could be added, until he heard the still more fiery style of his hon. colleague. That a vigour more than the law must be used, and that such was the declaration of his Majesty's Secretary at War, matter truly alarming to the people. He, who had made the metropolis of England a garrison town, and filled it in all quarters with cavalry: the soldiers, under his explicit order, lying with their horses ready saddled, and their feet almost ready to mount the stirrup. Where were the symptoms of insurrection to warrant all this military array? The freedom of Parliament itself appeared to him to be threatened, and possibly they might soon be deprived of the liberty of speech in that house. What had his hon. friend said? His explanation was bold, manly, and candid; they ought to have known, from his general character, that such it would be. He never attempted to sneak out of his declarations by paltry equivocations. He had said, that if the people of England were dead to all their former feelings, if they wished for these Bills, then he should deem himself no longer a fit servant for such a people: a declaration that was needless; they must know, the frame and texture of his mind could never suffer him to be the servant of slaves, and degrading as the term was, such must be their condition if these Bills passed into laws. Mr. *Sheridan* declared, he acceded to all that had been said by his hon. friend, and thought, as honourable men, they could not act otherwise. If the people were to ask how they were to act, if these Bills pass by corrupt majorities, he should tell them, they ought to resist whenever they could prudently do it. As men of spirit could they act otherwise? The people would say, "you, by your language in the house, have inflamed us; (a loud call of *Hear, Hear!*) and now you do not dare to pursue the measures you there maintained."

That the Constitution should be permanent was his first and most anxious desire; he did not wish to see a British Robespierre treading on the necks of the British people. The resemblance, he remarked, was too shocking to be overlooked. Robespierre, to maintain his authority, kept the people in in-

cessant alarm about plots and conspiracies, which again were necessary to him to bind the nation in stronger shackles. Robespierre could not visit the Mayor of Paris without his body guard; and Robespierre put the whole country under military execution, all under the pretext of security to the Constitution. The tyrant, however, could not long practise these arts with impunity. A whole people could not long endure a slavery so detestable from a hand so worthless. To the declaration of his right hon. friend he therefore implicitly subscribed. It must be the feeling of every true Englishman; of every man who acknowledged the principles which had seated the illustrious family of Brunswick on the throne.

Mr. *Wilberforce* said, such declarations were liable to very different constructions, he could not therefore but express his disapprobation of them. Some might suppose, they wished only to support ministers, without any regard to the interest of the nation. They had before heard of secession from Parliament, and attacks upon the constitution; it was a sort of parliamentary language not to be understood in its literal sense, but was well understood by the country. What he rose for, was to remark upon the notice given by the honourable gentleman for a motion for peace. With peace in their mouths, what had they in their hearts, when their tone went to draw the sword of civil discord, in order to plunge it in the bosom of their own country.

Mr. *Grey* said, the world would judge of the sincerity of Mr. *Wilberforce's* wish for peace. Of the sincerity of his own conduct, and of those with whom he acted, the country, he hoped, would not form a judgment from such invidious reflections as had been thrown out. From the principle which had been maintained by his right honourable friend (Mr. *Fox*) he would not shrink; and he would repeat with him, that if, by the government of the country, measures were carried into effect contrary to the wishes of a great majority of the people, to the liberties of the nation, if he should be asked, whether the people ought to refrain from resistance, he would say, that they only should induce them to refrain from motives of prudence. With respect to the Bills themselves, he concurred entirely with his right honourable friend, that no modification could make them otherwise than hostile to the principles of the constitution.

Colonel Rolle read an Address from Devon, which he said contained his own sentiments.

* The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* moved to adjourn, having previously proposed to postpone the consideration of the Libel on the House to Thursday, the Commitment of the Bill to Wednesday

Wednesday, and stated, that after the call of the House he meant to move that the Speaker leave the chair, in order to go into a Committee on the Seditious Meetings Bill.

The question was at length put, and the house adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

TUESDAY, *November 24.*

The Bill for preventing the making of Starch, Hair Powder, &c. from Wheat, was read a second time; as were also the Bills for preventing the Exportation of Soap, Candies and Tallow, and for permitting the Importation of the same for a limited time.

The house, in a Committee, went through Wakeman's Divorce Bill, and heard evidence to illegitimize the last child. —Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

TUESDAY, *November 24.*

THE CALL OF THE HOUSE

Occupied the attention of the members from four till eight o'clock, while strangers were excluded, several divisions, or excuses for absence, took place. At the commencement of this period,

Mr. *Sheridan* stated the manner in which the calls of the house had lately been trifled with, and rendered almost nugatory; and the necessity, in the present momentous crisis, of strictly enforcing the rule, however unpleasant the task. He therefore moved, that the house should then be called over, and gave notice, that he should move to repeat the call after a short interval.

A debate arose on a motion that the house be called over that day fortnight, and an amendment being moved, that it be called over on Friday se'nnight, it was carried in favour of the call on this day fortnight.

Sir W. Dolben rose to make a remark on the subject of the order of the House. He said, that the cry of *hear! hear!* had lately been so often and so loudly vociferated, that he was to a great degree prevented from hearing at all; he therefore hoped the Speaker would use his authority in maintaining more order in that respect in future.

Mr. *Gray* presented a petition from Newcastle, against the Bills

Bills depending in the house, signed, as he observed, by near 3000 persons, and obtained in the most unexceptionable manner; he said he understood, that an opposite petition had been procured, by means which he knew to have been, in some instances, highly improper. One person in particular, who had signed the petition for the Bills by mistake, had, he understood, not been allowed to erase his name; he understood also that many others had likewise signed the wrong petition.

Mr. *Branning* answered, he had received several letters, extracts from which he read, stating, that very unbecoming acts had been used in procuring the petition against the Bills presented by an honourable gentleman (Mr. Grey), and he proceeded to read a hand-bill, inviting the meeting, wherein it was stated that the county of Middlesex, the city of Westminster, and the city of London, the borough of Southwark, and all the merchants, bankers, and traders of London, with scarcely an exception, had already set the example to the country, of signing a petition against the Bills; the hand-bill, nevertheless, was dated and circulated in Newcastle the very same day on which the earliest of the petitions in or near the metropolis of which it made mention, was brought forward, and many days before the meeting in Middlesex took place.

Mr. Grey admitted there was some anticipation in thus stating the petitions to have been already carried, which the writer undoubtedly ought only to have spoken of as likely to be carried.

The *Attorney General* observed, that the people of Newcastle were not only misinformed as to the fact which had been mentioned, but it appeared that they were equally misinformed as to the state of the existing law of the country, and as to the enactments of the Bills against which they petitioned.

Other petitions were presented, and Sir G. Shuckburgh having intimated that he did not wish to prevent strangers being re-admitted into the gallery, after a few words from the Secretary a War, the gallery was opened.

Mr. Fox and the Chancellor of the Exchequer severally agreed in the propriety and necessity of this proceeding, and the call accordingly took place. A most unprecedented number of absentees were set down as defaulters, many of whom had sent no excuses whatever, or taken the least notice of the call.

At eight o'clock strangers were admitted into the gallery; but some noise being made, occasioned principally by the anxiety of persons to obtain seats, as the avenues had been extremely

tremely crouded all the afternoon, Sir George Shuckburgh moved that the gallery should be cleared.

The *Speaker* stated that a motion of that nature having been made, it only remained for him to desire the Serjeant to clear the gallery. The gallery was accordingly cleared.

On the strangers being turned out, Mr. Sheridan vindicated them from any intention of disrespect to the house; stated the great length of time they had been waiting in the lobby, and urged the ill appearance it would have at such a crisis, and when such a subject was in discussion, to shut themselves up and exclude the public from even hearing their proceedings.

About half past nine o'clock strangers were again admitted. At that time,

Mr. *Church* defended the proceedings of the meeting of the Freeholders of Middlesex convened at Leckney, than which, he said, nothing could be more orderly and regular: as a proof of this assertion, he desired to refer to members of the county, who were present.

Mr. *Milnes* said, the meeting of the county of Middlesex had been convened in consequence of a requisition, signed by many respectable characters, among whom were several of high rank. The novelty of the spectacle of so many noblemen mingling in popular meetings had probably contributed to collect a great concourse of people. Two noble dukes, who were (he believed) not freeholders, had addressed the meeting, and were heard with great attention. In attempting to speak upon the subject of the meeting he had not been so fortunate, having been repeatedly interrupted. He had endeavoured to state his disapprobation of two of the clauses in one of the Bills; but when he wished to express his conviction of the propriety of some such measures, he was not allowed to proceed. Another gentleman, who attended the meeting to oppose the petitions, was in the same situation; and there did not appear to him to be a candid disposition to canvass the business with fairness and impartiality.

Sir *W. Manners* declared he felt a considerable degree of surprise, on hearing that the numerous attendance mentioned had been ascribed to the novelty of peers and members of parliament appearing on such occasions, and was proceeding to state the great number of Peers, which he had known present at a county meeting, when

The *Speaker* reminded the house, that this conversation was irrelevant to the question then before them.

The question before the house was, Whether the petition from the town of Newcastle, against the Bills now pending in parliament, should lie on the table?

Mr.

Mr. *Byng* said, he was sorry that he was precluded from replying to his honourable colleague, had that not been the case, he declared he would have told him, that the gentlemen who interrupted him during his speech at the meeting, were the very same gentlemen who had returned him to parliament.

PETITION FROM THE MERCHANTS AND BANKERS.

Mr. *Erskine* said, that he had in his hand a piece of parchment, which he would not style a petition, but, in compliance with a phrase employed by an honourable gentleman, call a *something*. Mr. *Erskine* was about to read the title of the petition, but on opening the folds of parchment, found that he had taken up one which did not belong to him, which occasioned considerable mirth. Mr. *Erskine* said, that when the house was beset with petitions, in greater number from all quarters of the country than he had ever recollected to have been the case on any former occasion, against Bills of so alarming and destructive a tendency, it was not surprising that he should commit the mistake. He had intended to present the petition without any comment, or previous observation, thinking it the bounden duty of the representatives of the people to lay their complaints before parliament; from the calumnious and invidious remarks which it was at this time customary to make on petitions of a similar nature, he however found it necessary to say something. He had received it from the person whose name first appeared in the subscription to it, and who had been chairman of a meeting where it had been adopted, while such meetings were yet lawful, or allowed to be held. It had already been anticipated in the course of the evening, that this person was neither in trade, nor a native of this country. With respect to these points, he could not take upon himself to decide. He knew the gentleman was the brother of a most respectable person whom he had occasion to know, and he had understood him to be his partner in trade. It had likewise been stated that this petition could not be styled the Petition of the Bankers of the city of London, as no individuals of that description had subscribed it. Whether this was the case or not, he could not tell, nor did he think that there was any particular honour or dignity annexed to the name of banker, which could have led the petitioners to assume it. He had first looked at the language of the petition, in order to be informed whether the terms in which it was couched were proper and respectful to the house, and such as a member of parliament might present with credit, and he had found it in every way suitable to the dignity of the house, and to the importance of the occasion. It was signed .

signed by upwards of 2900 persons. Upon his being asked, what was the title of the petition? he owned he had been struck with some astonishment; and on his answering, that it was a petition of the merchants, bankers, and others, of the city of London, to be told the fact which been insinuated already against the petition, and the persons by whom it was subscribed. He believed the character and the views of the petitioners to be perfectly proper and constitutional. Mr. Waddington, the chairman, to whom he had already alluded, had some months since, upon the rumour of a threatened invasion, enrolled himself in the Southwark cavalry; and though nothing in his character afforded any thing like room for suspicion, he had been dismissed from the service, upon the single circumstance of having signed his name to an advertisement, calling a meeting to consider of the propriety of these Bills, which strike, as he would contend, at the root of the constitution. A fact like that argued in the strongest manner the mean and odious jealousy of the men by whom these corps were directed, of the conduct of those who shew themselves courageous enough to oppose unconstitutional measures, and afforded a reasonable ground of belief, that persons of such sentiments were carefully excluded considering the purposes to which they might be applied. He concluded with moving, "that this petition of the merchants, bankers, and other inhabitants of the city of London, be brought up."

Alderman Newnham said he meant no disrespect to the Gentleman, whose name stood at the head of the subscribers to the petition; but he was convinced that the meeting did not speak the sense of the merchants and bankers of the city of London.

Mr. *Ald. Lushington* said, he did not rise to object to the honourable gentleman bringing up the petition, nor was he unwilling to allow it all the weight it deserved. The honourable and learned gentleman had undoubtedly acted constitutionally in presenting the petition; he felt himself bound, however, to remark on the unfair influence used to obtain it. Many of the persons supposed to have signed it, would, he said, shortly petition for the Bills; and it would appear that the majority and far more respectable part of the merchants, bankers, manufacturers, as well as three-fourths of the householders, took no part in this business. It was at all times wise to advert to general principles; he would ask, therefore, whether the security and distribution of property, not universal suffrage, the modern theory, did not form the basis of the social state, and of the constitution of the country? Such at least was the

opinion of our ancestors. If the general sense of the nation was taken on the Bills, the Alderman said, he was persuaded that three-fourths of the people of property would be found to be favourable to them. Three-fourths of the description of persons said to have signed the petition, he had no doubt, were of the same kind; and, he trusted, when the real petition of the bankers, &c. should come forward, which it soon would, that it would have all the influence due to it.

Sir Benjamin Hammet said, the petition could not be stated to be the petition of the bankers of London, as no banker had been present at the meeting; if the petition was discovered not to have the real signatures of those whose names it bore as subscribers, the House, he conceived, ought not to receive it. He declared himself warranted to assert, that the persons who signed this had signed other petitions in different places. The fact undeniably was, that in the meeting where the petition was agreed upon, every misrepresentation was used; and while the advocates for the present petition argued for the liberty of the press and speech, those, who differed in opinion, were denied the liberty of speaking there, though nobody had any personal dislike to them. He imagined a right honourable gentleman opposite to him meant well; but he was free to say, that if his strong and ardent speeches actuated and inflamed the public mind, he would not be able to oppose the progress of sedition excited perhaps unintentionally, by himself. Such was the case of Lord George Gordon in the year 1780. His Lordship himself told him (Sir Benjamin Hammet) that he could not restrain the fury of the mob. He wished to warn the right honourable gentleman against such fatal consequences, he was requested by his constituents to present an humble address to his majesty, praying that some such regulations might be made for the security of monarchy and the constitution. He was sure the majority of the city were friendly to the Bills; and he hoped the House would not receive the petition before them as the sense of the bankers of London; as he was certain that not a single banker signed it.

Mr. Serjeant Adair said he would not discuss the point whether the petition were signed by the bankers, merchants, &c. of the city of London, from whom it was said to come. It was enough for him, that it was the petition of a great many of the inhabitants of London, who, whatever was their situation, were entitled to petition the legislature. He meant to advert to the observation of a learned gentleman, who said that it had been obtained at a public meeting, while such meetings were not illegal. No conclusion of that kind could justly be drawn from

from any measure depending at present in that House. That circumstance, however, was one of the misrepresentations which had been so frequent. Nothing could be more clear than that the pending Bills would not take away the right of petitioning, or assembling in such meetings. He did not so much doubt whether the petition expressed the true sentiments of the merchants and bankers, &c. as of the persons by whom it was signed, many of whom might have been deceived by the false account they received of the measures against which they remonstrated. Such misrepresentations of the principle and intention of the Bills, he said, he would never suffer to pass without attempting to restrain and expose them.

Mr. Fox said, several things had been observed and stated in the course of the debate, which ought not to go unnoticed. Insinuations against the conduct of noble dukes appearing at public meetings, and the novelty of such behaviour had been thrown out. The Middlesex meeting was not, he observed, the first instance in which peers and members of parliament had taken a share in county meetings. In 1780, meetings of that sort had been frequent, and had proved highly useful. He was convinced by the influence and spirit they had excited, that they had tended to abridge, by at least one or two years, the duration of a cruel and impolitic war. Similar meetings had, on various occasions, been held, and he would defy any man to deny the advantages that had resulted from them to the country.

Alarms, it was asserted, had been spread concerning the tendency of the Bills at present pending in parliament, and that these meetings were calculated to inflame and irritate the minds of the people against measures of no serious consequence to their liberties and the constitution. Was it possible that he should forget the zeal and activity which had been exerted to spread alarms without doors concerning the tendency of his India Bill. One gentleman (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) in arguing against that measure, had boldly avowed, that he would employ every means in his power to spread alarm among the people; and, while he recollected the circumstance, it was with the utmost satisfaction he recollected the answer he then returned, that it was the duty of every member to explain to his constituents, the nature of those measures, by which they were to be affected. In no situation in which he had been placed, had he forgot or ceased to respect the right of the subject to investigate public affairs, nor did he attempt to check that discussion, when it threatened to be unfavourable to the measures which he proposed, and which he was convinced were advantageous to the country. He

declared, he considered it as a symptom of the decay of the principles of the constitution, when, since the year 1780, such a revolution had taken place in the sentiments, and such an alteration in the language of gentlemen upon that important point.

With equal astonishment had he heard the attempts which had been made to detract from the weight of that almost universal public disapprobation by which the Bills had been condemned. It was roundly asserted that other petitions would come forward to counteract the influence of those already presented. Of that the House knew nothing; it was an absurd and ridiculous preference of speculation to facts which it was presumptuous to indulge. A worthy alderman (Mr. Lushington) had not only undertaken to answer for the merchants and bankers of London, and for his constituents, in contradiction to the positive vote of the Common Hall, but for three-fourths of the householders of the kingdom. Where were the facts upon which this assertion rested? Were three-fourths of the householders of Westminster for the Bills? Would the worthy alderman tell him that the supporters of the Bills had appealed to the parochial meetings with more success than they had appealed to general meetings?

It was almost incredible, he said, that gentlemen should blind, not merely their understanding against the reception of truth, but even against the testimony and demonstration of their senses. It indicated a perverseness of mind, which would hear, and see, and judge of nothing that was unwelcome, and which, in spite of the clearest evidence, doubted of every fact that was disagreeable. Will they tell me, said Mr. Fox, that three-fourths of the inhabitants of Westminster are not against these Bills, without contradicting my very senses?

But it was said, that the opposers of the Bills had been guilty of misrepresentation. Be it so, for the sake of argument, said Mr. Fox. They tell us, that other petitions will appear, and testify a different sense in the people. This, at least, was a powerful reason for delaying the progress of the Bills till these actually were brought forward. It had been said by a learned friend of his (Mr. Serjeant Adair) that these very petitions did no speak the sense of those who signed them. This was at once, and without proof, to take up a particular case, instead of the general presumption. His learned friend (Mr. Serjeant Adair) had accused his learned friend near him of misrepresenting the scope of the Bills, when he said that such a meeting as that from which the petition was presented could not take place where the Bill passed into a law. With the explanation he had repeatedly given, he would plead guilty to this accusation. He had stated, he said, that in such a meeting, no matter could be discussed freely, or to any effect.

They

They might meet, no doubt, but for how long a time? No longer than till the magistrate thought or chose to appear to think that something improper had been done, on which he might disperse them, and prevent their coming to any resolution. It must be admitted, therefore, that no misinterpretation had taken place; but that it was indubitably true that a meeting in such a situation is merely a nominal privilege, and the efficient importance or utility of it is entirely done away. With regard to the responsibility of the magistrate, a difference of opinion certainly was entertained, but none as to his right of interference. Why then flatter or delude men with the idea that they have the right to meet and deliberate, when its exercise depends on so precarious a circumstance as the virtue or the caprice of the superintending magistrates? Was it ever contradicted that this was the case? Whatever might be the degree of responsibility, it was undoubted that the meeting might be dissolved. [Mr. Fox was proceeding, when he was called to order, and it was stated that the argument into which he had gone was irregular.]

Mr. Fox, made an observation or two upon the call to order, and then said, that he should not trouble the House farther than to declare that if it had been supposed to have been literally stated by his honourable and learned friend, that no meeting could be held in future, that supposition was certainly unfounded; but if it had been supposed to have been stated that no free meetings could be held in future, to that statement he pleaded guilty. The distinction was so frivolous, as to be wholly unworthy of any man of sense and understanding.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, anxious as he was to shorten preliminary discussion, that the debate might not be unnecessarily prolonged, and that the house might form themselves into a Committee to discuss, clause by clause, the serious provisions of the Bill, at which period he should call upon gentlemen to shew how it could produce those dangerous consequences which had been attributed to it; yet when he heard the Right Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Fox) address so much of his speech to him in particular, it was impossible for him to remain silent; more especially as it was evident that these preliminary discussions was intimately connected with the merits of the Bill. "The Right Hon. Gentleman says, that it is at present the subject of complaint, that he and his friends are spreading an alarm, and at the same time he reminds me of a period (during the discussion of the East India Bill) when I wished to spread an alarm;" I desire, said the Chancellor of the Exchequer, distinctly to state, that the ground of my complaint is, not that any gentleman, who sees in the Bill what, to him appear

appears injurious to the liberties of this country, should wish to arouse the attention and jealousy of his constituents; the complaint I have to make is, that any methods should be adopted to prevent the people of the country from forming a fair and impartial judgment respecting these Bills, and from expressing their sense of them, as the result of this impartial examination. The charge I urge against the gentlemen in opposition to these Bills is, first, that the means they make use of for spreading an alarm is misrepresentation; and, secondly, that this alarming of the people is attempted for the express purpose of rousing them, if practicable, to a spirit of resistance against the legislature, with a view to overthrow the Acts of the King, Lords and Commons, in parliament assembled; and, instead of the peaceable and constitutional means of petitioning, to encourage the people to resort to force, a language which, he believed, no individual in this country had ever held before, and which the Right Hon. Gentleman had, at least, intitled himself to the honour of having introduced into parliament itself. Of this we complain; nor shall we cease to complain, that those gentlemen who express such peculiar anxiety for the interests of the people, for the welfare of the country, and such a regard for the privileges of parliament; that under pretence of attachment to whig principles, they had affected to maintain those doctrines which were justifiable only under extraordinary circumstances, and to lay them down as established maxims founded in truth and general wisdom; because our ancestors had recourse to resistance to a king, who aimed at the overthrow of the national religion, who attempted to govern without parliaments altogether, who was, in fact against all law, and violated the constitution of the country; this resistance they considered as a general rule of action, and in their imitation of the principle, were animating the people, not to an opposition of illegal and unconstitutional exercise of prerogative, or a wanton disregard of the laws, but to a resistance of a law, though legally sanctioned by the consent of the three branches of the legislature. I defy these gentlemen to shew the consistency of such conduct with the principles and practice of those whom they profess to make the objects of their imitation. We also complain, that the alarms attempted to be raised have been by means of misrepresentation." This the Chancellor of the Exchequer exemplified in what had taken place at some of the meetings in the North of England, as well as near the Metropolis; also in the language put into the mouths of some of the petitioners against the Bills. To induce the people of Newcastle to sign the petition against the

the Bill, it was affirmed, that two other cities near the Metropolis had met, and came to similar resolutions, when, in fact, the meeting was only about to be held in one, and no meeting had taken place in the other. A gentleman had said, that these places had since petitioned, which, though true, did not render the representation less false, at the time it was made.

Among other extraordinary petitions that had been procured, one had been brought up from the journeymen tailors of London; a petition which expressly stated that the journeymen are under the necessity of applying to the House against the Bills, because, if they should pass into laws, it would make it illegal for them to meet on matters relative to their trade. This petition was not less ridiculous than malicious; it was notorious that the Bills did not in any possible view extend to such meetings; an evident instance of the manner in which this and other petitions were procured. Similar misrepresentations had been employed to procure petitions from bodies of men not in the smallest degree affected by the Bills. A large and industrious class of people in this metropolis, (the weavers,) a class with whom it was no light matter to tamper, had handbills distributed among them, to procure a meeting, wherein the alarm was attempted to be given, that should the Bills pass, it would be illegal for them to meet for an increase of wages; he was happy to find that such a base misrepresentation had proved unsuccessful: It was notwithstanding an instance of the wicked and dangerous arts used to irritate the public mind and to provoke the people to sedition and treason."

Calumnies, he observed, had been industriously propagated in different parts of the country, stating that the Bills went to prohibit the meetings of private families, and that the right honourable gentleman had opposed the Bills on that ground. In the original opening of the Bill, it was true he had cursorily stated, that one of the clauses went to prohibit meetings called together by public advertisement, for political discussions, without giving notice to a magistrate, if so many above the stated number of the family were present; that clause however it was proposed to omit. To say that either of these Bills went to prevent private families from meeting, without giving such a public advertisement, was neither more or less than a downright calumny. The discussions which the Bills had undergone, had, in some measure, restrained that freedom of misrepresentation. He said, however, that he had been informed that at the meeting at Surry, it had been agreed, that a meeting called by the Sheriff would have been illegal under the operation of the Bills, though the meeting being called in that manner was a sufficient answer to the observation.

In fact, scarcely a day had passed in which some one or other of the gentlemen in opposition had not represented the Bill as a restraint upon the right of petitioning the legislature : nay, they had gone farther, and stated it to be an *extinction* of the right of the subject to petition, although every man who had read the Bill, must see that it allowed all the extent of petitioning by which our ancestors were contented to make known their wishes or complaints to parliament. Every meeting convened by lord lieutenants, *custodes rotularum*, or magistrates, was exempted from the operations of this Bill, and others were simply put under certain regulations, and by no means pronounced illegal. He must observe, however, that self-created meetings were unknown to our ancestors ; meetings which have endeavoured to propagate French revolutionary principles, formed upon the plans of the Jacobin Clubs, and adopting their very phrases of affiliated societies, &c.

Another misrepresentation, he said was, that in proportion to the discretionary power which the Bill would give to a magistrate, it was a direct invasion of the right of the subject. When this clause came to be discussed in the Committee, it would be a matter of wisdom to proceed with all due caution, and it might possibly be amended. He had been told by an honourable gentleman opposite, that he had known him long enough ; he might say that the same length of time had afforded him an opportunity of also knowing the honourable gentleman, who perhaps inferred, that the eagerness with which he had defended the principle of the Bill, covered a wish to introduce some modifications of its clauses. Was it, he asked, to the discredit of any member, who brought in a Bill upon any matter of importance, that he either changed his opinion as to the propriety of some particular clauses, or submitted to the better judgment of others ? When the house went into a Committee on that clause, and were endeavouring to check societies that might be dangerous to the constitution, it would, he was ready to admit, be advisable to leave as little as possible to the discretion of the magistrate ; even taking this discretionary power as it now stood, those who had first brought in the Bill, proposed to render the magistrate responsible for the exercise of it. He declared himself ready to meet the statement of the honourable gentleman, that though the Bill did not *totally* destroy the privilege of holding public meetings, yet, in fact, it rendered the exercise of that right in a great degree abortive. This was the argument which went on the assumption that there

was no difference between the extinction of a right and the regulation of it. What might be considered as a second edition of misrepresentation, he said, had been manifested. A learned gentleman (Mr. Erskine) had presented a petition, said to come from the merchants, bankers, &c. of the city of London, which stated, that they petitioned the house, *while they yet had the power*. He desired the learned gentleman to point out one word in the Bill, by which such a petition could be presented or deemed illegal. Thus an alarm was pretended, where there was no ground to occasion it. This was a petition from *the Bankers*, &c. of London, as they called themselves: if it should turn out, that though they speak in the name of *all* the Bankers, yet no one Banker is to be found in the list, what is this but another misrepresentation?

The Chancellor of the Exchequer next took notice of what had fallen from another learned gentleman, (Serjeant Adair) though he agreed with him in the misrepresentation of the learned gentleman, (Mr. Erskine), he could not agree with him, that if a petition was stated to come from the Merchants and Bankers of the City, it made no difference whether it had or had not the signatures it set forth. It was a species of that misrepresentation which he was lately deprecating; and which, he was free to say, had excited most of the petitions against the Bills. He would ask, what proof the gentlemen on the other side had to shew of the success of their exertions, at a period when they said liberty was at the last gasp. From their common pretensions he owned he had little confidence in their assertions. In spite of all their clamours, that the power of exposing grievances or of opposing attacks, was taken away, they would find it easy to employ the same artifices against any new measure to which their opposition should be directed. The present Bill was represented worse than the preceding, yet they still preserved the same perseverance in opposition, and the same opportunity of misrepresentation. He wished gentlemen to consider the Bill clause by clause; and they would be forced to confess, that while they gave the magistrate every power of dispersion by the Bills, they were carefully guarded, in order to preserve the constitution inviolate. Every man must see, that if the meetings were not compelled to notify their assembling to the magistrate, the regulation could not apply to them. He concluded by saying, that if gentlemen considered his arguments, they would see that he proved distinctly that the assertions of opposition were the grossest misrepresentations, and

that the two Bills were perfectly consistent with old and constitutional regulations.

Mr. *Fox* rose to set the honourable gentleman right as to his speech at the Surry meeting. He had said there, that if the Sheriff had insisted that there was a majority on one side while it was on the other, and had then left the chair, the nature of the meeting would have been changed, and it would have been exposed to the operation of the Bill.

Mr. *Onslow* said, he thought it his duty to set gentlemen right respecting the meeting at Epsom. It was stated, that the meeting was convened for the express purpose of petitioning for peace; and thus people were deluded, thinking that they gave their signatures against the war, when in fact the petition was merely a petition against the Bills. Some gentlemen had asserted, that the meeting amounted to four or five thousand; so far from that being the true state of the case, he was convinced it did not exceed three hundred: and surely three hundred were not enough to express either the sense or nonsense of the county of Surry. He was aware that, he might be asked how many were in his opinion competent to speak either. He declared he would not take upon himself to say; he barred that joke; he believed, however, that one-fourth part of them consisted of orators from Copenhagen-house: he judged them to be members of the London Corresponding Society from their head-dress, who had been deluded by the misrepresentations, which had gone abroad, and were told if they did not sign the petition against the Bills, that they would declare themselves enemies to peace and friends to eternal war.

Mr. *Onslow* asserted, that he knew nothing of the dismission of Mr. Waddington from the command of the Surrey Corps of Cavalry, the odium of the measure, therefore, if any belonged to it, appertained not to him.

Mr. *Fox* said, the honourable gentleman seemed to entertain no very good opinion of the understanding of his countrymen, when, in summing up the reasons that influenced their votes, he had asserted that they had declared themselves for a measure with which they were unacquainted, although the Sheriff read the Petition and Address six times over.


Mr. *Sheridan* began his speech with taking notice of the charge which had been made of misrepresentation on the part of those who opposed the Bills before the house. The Minister, he observed, complained of the speeches which had been made upon them, and had complained that gentlemen, who opposed him, stated that these Bills did not leave to the people

ple the right of petitioning; that they had said that all meetings for that purpose had been done away. They had never said so; they had only said that the effect which could be wished to follow meetings on political subjects would be done away; for that if any meeting took place, it was in the power of two magistrates to dissolve these meetings at their discretion. That by these Bills, any meetings on the questions of war or peace, on the conduct of the minister, on the miscarriages of his plans, on the nature of his projects, and on all points for which the opinion of the public could be useful to them in being made known to that house, would be done away by these Bills. On all these points, one of the Bills gave to the magistrates the power, not indeed of preventing meetings, but of dissolving them at pleasure, under a pretence that the proceedings of the meetings, in the judgment of such magistrates, tended to sedition. He would beg leave to notice the misrepresentations of a learned gentleman who had spoke that night, as well as the misrepresentations of the right hon. gentleman who had complained, that resistance was recommended to the people of England, if the Bills before the house passed into a law. He was ready to allow, with that learned gentleman, that a meeting held by law, or convened upon legal notice, was not taken away by the Bill; he would however insist, that the people could not meet otherwise. Could that be considered as a free and proper meeting, which was undeniably under the check of an attendant magistrate, who could, from his own surmise, instantly prevent it from discussing the object which had called it together, or dissolve it after it had entered into such discussion? If the Bill passed, he was confident that Englishmen could not deliberate on the propriety of peace or war, on the expenditure of the public money, or the conduct of his Majesty's ministers. They could not meet to deliberate on any grievance whatever. He could safely say, when that Act was passed, that it was no matter what Bill was brought in, what arbitrary law was proposed, for a complete despotism would then be necessarily established. It had been observed, that after the passing of the Bill, a meeting might be held without public notice: he would admit the assertion; but to what effect would that assembly be held, when a magistrate might prevent any of its members from uttering a single word?

For a moment he would suppose, that a meeting of the people was held for the purpose of obtaining a Parliamentary Reform; were the right honourable gentleman a magistrate, was it not evident how he would act on that occasion? Did he

not at a former period, when that subject was mentioned in the house, declare that it tended to excite unseasonable alarms? And was not a declaration of that kind, from a person so high in power, a good sanction for a magistrate to suppress the most respectable assembly met for that purpose? Mr. Waddington, a gentleman of unblemished character and respectability, whose signature stood first on the Petition presented that night by his learned friend, had, on that very account, been expelled from an armed association into which he had entered for the defence of his country; and would not the men who had so illiberally expelled him for a difference in political opinion, take advantage of the discretionary power given by the Bill, to prevent any meeting, which had for its object a public measure that might be displeasing to them? This might, and most probably would, be the case, if any number of persons met for the purpose of obtaining a Parliamentary Reform, in the manner recommended some years ago by the minister himself.

As the minister had complained of the effect of misrepresentation on the subject of these Bills, he would ask, whether he might not retort upon that charge? It was natural, Mr. Sheridan said, to connect this Bill with that for the regulation of the affairs of the East India Company, formerly introduced by his right hon. friend (Mr. Fox). The author of that Bill had been grossly misrepresented upon that occasion, by those who supported the present minister at the time. complaint of misrepresentation came not, therefore with the best grace from that quarter.

The effect the opposition to these Bills had produced on the minister was, he said, sufficiently manifest. It had already made him determine to lower his views; as was evident from his having that night elevated his voice; that being a pretty general indication on which the house might rely. Strangers, who heard the right honourable gentleman that night, might possibly think, from his tone, that he was more than ever determined to pursue his plan with vigour; those, however, who had frequently heard him, and who knew him better, drew from that circumstance a contrary conclusion. They knew that, in proportion as he was lofty in his manner, he was sinking in his intention; and therefore he, for one, should not object to attending the discussion of the Provisions of this Bill in a Committee, if to a Committee it was to go, in order to see what sort of a thing the Bill was intended to be at  He should not object, he said, to attending to this, unless

less the minister should be unwilling that any of his opponents should be witnesses of his degradation.

With regard to the degree of credit that was due to petitions from the people, and what was or was not to be considered as the voice of the people, it was, he said, a matter that called for observation. He was sorry that the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Dundas) was not in the house; he had heard that minister say, that this Bill ought not to pass, unless the sense of the people was clearly in its favour; all he wished for was that this declaration should be abided by; if that were the case, he was confident that the Bill would never pass into a law. Many petitions had already been brought in, and time ought to be given in order that the house might see how many would be brought on both sides of the question; he was confident that, if that rule were observed, the real sense of the people would be found to be so strong as soon to put an end to such measures. He gave notice that he should himself present a petition from the Ward of Farringdon-without, signed by 1700 persons, who, as he understood, made one-sixth of the whole city of London; and many other members had petitions from very numerous bodies of men from different parts of the kingdom. He said this, because he had heard from some worthy magistrates, that a great number of petitions would come from the most respectable housekeepers in the kingdom in favour of the Bills; and he could not help observing on what had fallen from a worthy magistrate of the city of London, (Sir B. Hammet,) who had said, that as we'll might these Bills be said to be an infringement on the right of petition, as that hanging a man for forgery was an infringement on writing. Had that worthy magistrate talked of the abuse of franking, he might have been listened to with more attention, for it was a subject on which, as the house well knew, he had some experience. He next took notice of what had been said by another worthy Alderman, (Mr. Lushington,) who had introduced a topic, which, in his opinion, ought to be deprecated in that House, because it might lead to infinitely bad consequences: he meant that of making a distinction between petitioners on account of the weight which was due to property; that it was property, and not numbers, that gave weight to petitions. This was a wrong principle to be dwelt upon in the discussion of petitions in that house, nor was it universally followed by those who were the most ready to introduce it. He should be glad to know whether an honourable gentleman, (Mr. Mainwaring,) who had complained of the treatment he experienced at the meeting of the county

county of Middlesex, if the case had been reversed, and he had been joined by the majority of the meeting, and the noblemen who attended had been against him and the majority, in their sentiments, he then would have said any thing on the subject of property? In fact, those distinctions between wealth and indigence, in considering the merits of petitions, were false and foolish. To cry up the consequence of property against numbers, or to make a distinction between the owner of land, and the industry and labour of those who render it fertile, was a bad policy in that house, when any appeal was made to its justice in the form of petition.

Sir Benjamin Manivet rose to explain. *Sir Benjamin* said, he did not mean to reflect on the proceedings of the Common Hall, nor to state more than that the speakers on both sides were not listened to with equal patience and attention.

The Attorney General began with repeating what he had taken the liberty to say upon a former evening, that the more the people examined the Bills, the better satisfied would they be with them. Though it had been called a villainous hypocrisy to say that they were intended to secure the rights and liberties of the people, he persisted in that assertion, and he conceived that his learned friend (*Mr. Erskine*) had either not read the Bills, or if he had read them, that he did not understand them, for the bankers would have as much power, after they were passed, to assemble upon any public business as before.

With respect to the means by which the petition was obtained from Newcastle upon Tyne, he produced a hand-bill of invitation for that purpose. His learned friend (*Serjeant Adair*) had declared, that he thought the title of a petition but of little consequence; in which opinion he differed from him, and contended that the petition was thereby one species of imposition or misrepresentation, that a bill was another calculated to produce the same effect. He remembered that he formerly received an anonymous letter from Ireland, directing his attention to a newspaper full of advertisements, as a test of the general sense of the people there upon some public measure, and that when he read the advertisements, he found that various meetings were held in different parts of the kingdom all on the same day, which was the 15th day of some month he did not recollect. In the same manner was the extraordinary coincidence and co-operation which the petitions from the different parts of Great Britain were at the same time procured. He read the hand-bill published at Newcastle, which stated, "that it was
with

with great satisfaction the people of Newcastle were informed that the two Bills at present pending in Parliament had excited an alarm in Middlesex and Westminster, &c. &c. and that the merchants, bankers, and traders of London, were almost unanimously determined to petition Parliament on the same subject. The town of Newcastle had, in consequence, followed, as it thought, the great examples of such respectable places, but he doubted not that it would hereafter express its disapprobation of statements so inaccurate and incorrect. The hand-bill further stated, that, contrary to the fifth article of the Bill of Rights, the Bill which, with a country inaccuracy, it represented to be brought into the House of Commons by Lord Grenville, would not allow any meeting to be called independent of the presence, permission, or authority of a minister or magistrate; and that any person convicted upon that Bill, was liable to a sentence of transportation for any number of years adjudged, *at the pleasure of the court, in Italics.*" The writer of this hand-bill, in quoting a passage of that Bill, had either purposely or unwittingly forgotten the words *maliciously* and *advisedly*, without which no charge of treason could be substantiated; and in the explanation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Bill, it was misrepresented that all meetings for the redress of grievances were thereby declared illegal, unless authorised by a certain number of magistrates. Lord Grenville's Bill more clearly defined treason, although it had created no new misdemeanour; therefore the question for the house to consider was, whether such a Bill was necessary, just and proper, and whether it was proportioned to the necessity which would be the subject of future discussion? He submitted it as his humble opinion, that enormous grievances did at this time exist, which the law could not as it at present stood, redress; if he were wrong in this opinion, he should throw off what he considered as his duty to support them. He allowed that petitions ought to be treated with the utmost respect, come from whom they would; for every English name was an obligation upon that house; though it was the duty of that house afterwards to examine the objects of the petitions, and decide on their propriety. For his own part, he should be happy, if any particular clauses could be modified, or rejected altogether, provided such restrictions could be retained as the important necessity called for.

Sir Watkin Lewis declared, that so much had been said respecting the city of London, that he thought himself at liberty, in the absence of the Lord Mayor, to declare for him his opinion of the late proceedings at Guildhall. He had no scruple

scruple in saying, that, on that occasion, the sense of the livery was fairly taken, and that a majority were decidedly against the Bills. He remarked, however, that the livery were only the representatives of the freemen of London, and that the house could no more judge of the opinion of the freemen from the resolutions of the livery, than they could ascertain upon all occasions, the sentiments of the livery, from the votes of the representatives for the city. If the house were eager to take advantage of any informality, he thought they were furnished with it in the title of the petition which had been moved to be brought up for rejecting it, as it pretended to be what it really was not, a petition of the merchants and bankers of the city of London; a circumstance, however, which the generosity of the house, ever indulgent to the complaints of their constituents, he was confident would be willing to overlook.

Mr. Grey declared he found himself called upon by personal considerations, to say a few words, at a time when he certainly was not much inclined to intrude himself upon the attention of the house. With respect to the petition in question, he confessed, he did not know whether or not it was signed by any Bankers in London; but of one thing he was confident, that many respectable Bankers had attended at the meeting at which the petition was voted. The misrepresentations with which the opposers of the Bills had been charged, and the reflections which the learned gentleman had taken an opportunity, in consequence of supposed misrepresentations, to throw out against the petitions which had been presented against them, he said demanded the particular attention of the house. Of a question on which parties so materially differed, as to render the issue such as to involve the salvation or the subversion of the constitution of the country, it was not impossible to make very opposite representations; and these it was natural for either party to charge as misrepresentations on the other. The right honourable gentleman (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) had boasted of spreading an alarm about the India Bill, which his right honourable friend (Mr. Fox) had brought into parliament: he would therefore ask him, if there was no misrepresentation of his right honourable friend on that occasion, in consequence of that alarm? Was it not said of his right honourable friend, that he wished by the means of the Bill to place himself and his connections in a permanent situation? Was it not said, that he wished to wrest the crown from the present family on the throne, and to secure it for himself and his heirs? And was it not asserted, that

that he wished to seize upon the money belonging to the East-India Company, with a view to his own private aggrandizement? Did not the right honourable gentleman know that such things were said; and did he not know them to be what every sober thinking man must consider gross and scandalous misrepresentations? Because these misrepresentations went abroad, did the right honourable gentleman abate his opposition to the Bill? In all cases of a similar nature, there naturally would be misrepresentation; in the present instance, he would be bold to say, that there had been as great misrepresentation on the one side as on the other; so, that balancing the influence of both, the opinions of the people, as they were delivered, might be considered as an unequivocal testimony of the sense of the country.

The learned gentleman had, he thought, complained without much cause; in the first instance which he had adduced, the words maliciously and advisedly, which had been omitted in the hand-bill, summoning the meeting, were of very little importance, inasmuch as the jury, whatever was the law, never would, in their verdict, lose sight of the intention with which the act was committed. With respect to the other, that no meeting could be held for petitioning parliament, without the permission and authority of a magistrate, though the definition was not given with all the accuracy of a special pleader, he contended, that this was the substance and effect of the Bill. A meeting might indeed be convened, but its proceedings were entirely under the controul of a magistrate, who, by a tyrannical and capricious mandate, might frustrate every purpose for which it was called. What, he would ask, was to be done if the sheriff should refuse to call a meeting? He knew two instances himself, one had lately occurred in Northumberland, in which the high sheriff for the county had refused to call a meeting, upon application made to him. Would it then be intended, that this Bill did not infringe the right of petitioning? The subjects might meet and petition, indeed, and so could the people of Russia, under certain restrictions, similar to those which were about to be imposed upon the people of England. The petition which he had presented from the journeymen Tailors was another instance, their complaint of not being allowed to meet, to consult about their wages, was, he said, founded upon that clause of the Bill which prohibits all meetings where money was taken. In taking notice of what was said by his right honourable friend (Mr. Fox) the preceding night, he said that upon mature deliberation, he subscribed to every word of it. The right honour-

able gentleman had said that he wished to stir the people to resistance against the government, if these Bills be passed into law. What his right honourable friend had said was founded on the pure principles of our constitution. His sentiments were taken from the very foundation of our revolution, which seated the present family on the throne, and if that be not true, the family of Brunswick were usurpers. He would say again, that if any measure, destructive to the rights and liberties of the people of this country, be carried into effect; no matter by what part of government; but if any measure of that nature be carried into effect, after the great majority of the people had pronounced their voice against it, resistance was justifiable.—No further did his right honourable friend go upon that occasion. He did not state that he wished to rouse the people to resistance; he only said that in such case resistance would no longer be a question of morality, but a question of prudence; but he did not, even in that case, state himself to be an advocate for resistance. He said this, that it might not be thought that he was afraid of avowing what he had already assented to; and he would say, that he was persuaded, the more it was examined, the more it would be found to be consonant to the very foundation of that constitution which they all admired, and which was the best security of the subject on one hand; and on the other, the best support to the throne on which his Majesty was placed.

Mr. Alderman Le Mesurier rose to say a few words relative to the Common Hall, respecting which some observations had been made. He was perfectly ready to admit, that of those who were present upon that occasion, a decided majority were against the Bills before the house; when he admitted that, however, he begged to make some few observations upon what passed there. He not only thought that the sense of the Livery of the City of London was not expressed at that meeting, but that the sense of those who were present was not fairly taken. Those who spoke against the Bills were heard with great attention and applause, but those who attempted to offer their reasons why they were of opinion that the Bills should pass, were not suffered to speak. Several gentlemen of the utmost respectability, endeavoured to obtain a few moments audience, but in vain; the instant any one of them gave the least symptoms of an inclination to support the Bills, a clamour was instantly raised, and all attempts at rational argument were silenced. Beside this, those gentlemen who had the good fortune to agree with the majority of the people present, in his opinion, most grossly misrepresented

sented the nature and object of the Bills; as a proof of which, he would state an argument of an honourable gentleman then in his eye, who was present at that meeting: that honourable gentleman had said, "That if these Bills passed, no book or pamphlet could be published without an *imprimatur*." He would leave it, therefore, to the candour and good sense of the house, whether there was any thing in the Bills which could be construed into an attack on the liberty of the press. Such indeed was the misapprehension of what was passing, that when the Lord Mayor held up his hand, merely to enforce silence, he was supposed to be putting the question, and several people held up their hands accordingly. So convinced was he that the intentions of the people present could not fairly be collected in the usual way, that he proposed a poll or division; but, upon consulting the proper officer, he found that it was irregular, and utterly impracticable to obtain either.

The Alderman said, he wished further to state, that the Guildhall was so large, that it was impossible for any man to be heard from one end of it to the other; nay, it was even impossible to hear the officer put the question. Precautions certainly were taken to prevent any persons but of the Livery from entering; and the regulation prevailed until the Hall was half full, after which he believed any persons who chose were suffered to enter. He desired, therefore, upon the whole, to be understood, as admitting that a great majority of those who were in the Common Hall were against the Bill in question, but that they by no means expressed the sense of the Livery of London.

Mr. *W. Smith* explained, by stating that, instead of misrepresenting the nature of the Bills in the Common Hall, the worthy Alderman had misrepresented him, for he argued only, that if these Bills passed into a law, he should have every reason to fear that the next Bill which should be brought into parliament would be for restraining the liberty of the press, and subjecting it to an *imprimatur*. He could not suppose this misrepresentation to be intentional, but attributed it to the confusion of noise which the worthy Alderman complained of, and which must of course, have affected his hearing. The misrepresentation of any man's words, however, before his face, were but of little consequence, he said, as it gave him an opportunity to explain. He remarked as a singular circumstance, that all the representatives of the Livery opposed the resolutions of that very Livery by whom they were elected. With regard to the petition which had caused this extraneous debate, he said, that although he was ac-

quainted only with a very small number of bankers in the city, and still less so with their signatures, yet he knew some very well; and he saw subscribed to that petition about half a dozen names, which, both christian and surname, were familiar to him, and so was the hand-writing; and the names, he would be bold to say, were not written in such a hand as any banker should have cause to be ashamed of.

Sir *Benjamin Hammet*, to prevent his being misunderstood, stated, that he had not said that no banker had signed that petition, but that no banker had attended the meeting; at least he believed not.

The petition was then read and ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. *Erskine* presented a petition from upwards of 1500 persons living at Portsmouth and Portsea, and said, that if the Bills now pending pass, the petitioners, whose names he exhibited to the house, could never appear to a similar petition again. An advantage, he said, had been taken of an expression of his, uttered in a parenthesis, when lamenting the innovations threatened by the present Bills; he had said, "whilst yet the right of petitioning remains without infringement of law." In that expression he insisted that he had been correct: and it particularly applied to the petition before him. The Bill of Rights was, he contended, repealed by the Bills: if petitions were to be presented, how are they to be framed, debated, or signed, but in meetings? Was it possible, he would ask, for numerous bodies of people to obtain rooms large enough to hold a number of persons without paying money for them, and were they not thus proscribed by law? The house, he observed, had been the preceding night employed in reading a whole book, in order to judge whether the whole was or was not a libel, how then could a justice be allowed a power so much greater than that house of judging of the seditious nature of a speech before he had heard the whole of it to understand the context? Yet, in the former case, the house had deemed two days necessary to deliberate after perusal, and in the latter the decision was to be made before the hearing. Such in fact was the discretion given to magistrates, which no principles could reconcile, and every day, he was persuaded, of which would display the danger and utility. What a situation would the working Taylors be placed in, were the Bills to pass into laws, Bills which interfered with their means of employment, and the support of their families. Mr. *Erskine* having read an extract from a declaration of the London Corresponding Society, in which they disclaimed the doctrine of an equalization of property, concluded with recommending

commending a system of lenity and mildness, instead of a system of severity and terror. He then moved, That the petition be brought up.

The petition was read in opposition to the Bills pending in parliament. It was signed by 1544 persons. Ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. *Mainwaring* presented a Petition from the United Society of Publicans in London, Westminster, Middlesex, and the places adjacent. The Petition stated, that a Bill was pending in Parliament, which it was understood would interfere with the friendly societies meeting at the houses of publicans, praying that such clauses might be introduced as might prevent it from interfering with the interests of the petitioners, and begging that they might be heard against the Bill by counsel, if it should be necessary.

Mr. *Sheridan* remarked, that the publicans had not objected to the principle of the Bills, because they were under a sort of controul on account of their licences. He thought that as they had proposed to be heard by counsel, that proceeding should take place upon the second reading, and before the Bill went into a Committee; and since it appeared that the right of meeting for friendly subscriptions, and the purposes of trade, were to remain wholly and untouched, he wished to know whether means would be taken to satisfy the people upon it?

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that he should never attempt to introduce any alteration in the laws to affect the rights of the common clubs or friendly societies. As to the hearing of counsel on this petition, he conceived that the proper time would be when the Bill come out of the Committee upon the report.

The *Speaker* observed, that counsel was only proposed to be heard if necessary, and therefore, after the Bill had been in a Committee, it was not too late for the omission or introduction of any clause which the petitioners might require, nor even for the recommitment of the Bill.

The following petitions were also presented against the Bill. The petition of the electors and other inhabitants of the borough of Southwark, by Lord William Russell.

Two petitions from the inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood of Manchester; the one signed by 4303 and the other by 6000 persons.

A petition from the city of Coventry, signed by 2350 persons.

A petition of the merchants, manufacturers, traders, and other inhabitants of the town of Paisley. These four last were presented by Mr. Fox.

Mr. *Sheridan* presented the petition from the Ward of Farringdon Without, the sixth part of the whole city of London, signed by 1700 persons.

The Order of the Day was then read.

Mr. *Grey* gave notice that the motion which he had announced for Monday next, he should defer to Monday following.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* then moved for the reading of the orders of the day, when he proposed that the Bill for preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies should be committed for the next day (*this day*;) and the Bill for the Safety and Preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government, the first open day.

Mr. *Fox* said, that the Army Estimates were to be taken into consideration on Thursday; when

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* informed the house, that as the business had been two days deranged, he should postpone the consideration of the Army Estimates, as well as every other question, until the Bills were finished, and accordingly announced the commitment of the Bill for the safety of his Majesty's Person, &c. on Friday next.

Adjourned at half past two.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

WEDNESDAY, November 25.

The House, in Committee, went through the Bills for preventing the making of Starch, Hair Powder, &c. from Wheat, and for preventing the Exportation of Soap, Candles, and Tallow, and for permitting the Importation of the same, duty free, for a limited time.

The Report of Wakeman's Divorce Bill was brought up.—Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

WEDNESDAY, November 25.

The Farnborough Road Bill was read a third time, and passed.

RELIEF

RELIEF OF THE POOR.

Sir William Young gave notice of his resolution on some future day, to move for leave to bring in a Bill to regulate the employment of the poor in their own houses. The hon. Baronet stated generally the hardships which they now suffered, and the necessity of a law to the effect mentioned.

Mr. Whitbread, jun. applauded the honourable Baronet for his humane intentions. He was glad that the subject had been brought forward, as it afforded him an opportunity of submitting to the consideration of the house another motion for the Relief of the Poor, of which he had on a former day given notice. His motion, he said, would be for leave to bring in a Bill to explain and amend a statute passed in the fifth year of Elizabeth, to enable the magistrates in their several counties to regulate the price of labour. This Act would not, he said, operate to any prejudicial alteration in the price of labour; it would not go to enforce the magistrate to act in opposition to the emergency of the times; it would not destroy any of the existing statutes respecting the regulations for the poor, but merely empower the magistrate to grant that relief which in his wisdom might seem meet, as the occasion might require.

After lamenting the hardships which the poor suffered, *Mr. Whitbread* concluded by moving, for leave to bring in a Bill to amend and improve so much of an Act of the 5th of Elizabeth, as related to the regulations, in order that the price of labour might be fixed in the districts at the quarterly sessions, agreeably to the tenor to be mentioned in the bill.

Mr. Honeywood seconded the motion.

Sir John Rous observed on the importance of such a Bill, and said he was happy that the hon. gentleman meant to bring it forward so soon. The Justices of Peace, at the Quarter Sessions, in his county (Suffolk), had recommended some measures to him and his hon. colleague (*Sir Charles Bunbury*) upon the subject, and they had accordingly had various meetings upon it, the result of which was to proportion the labourers' wages to the price of corn; but there was one strong objection to this plan, which was, that it would be impracticable for one Bill to answer the purpose all over the kingdom, as the price of provisions and labour so greatly varied in different counties. He was exceedingly glad to find that the Bill proposed by the hon. gentleman would obviate this inconvenience; and promised to support it.

Sir Charles Bunbury rose to confirm the declarations of his colleague, respecting their meetings, for the redress of this labouring part of the community, and was no less glad than him to find their design anticipated by the hon. gentleman. He thought it would have been better, if some voluntary regulations had been made by the employers, but as that was not the case, it might be necessary that that power should be assumed by the legislature.

Mr. Charles Dundas said, his experience induced him to believe that it was impossible for the honourable gentlemen to obtain the object they had in view. The magistrates, or the house, had it not in their power to affix a price to husbandry labour, in the power of the farmer to pay, that would, during the present scarcity and high price of corn, enable a labourer to buy bread for himself and his family, supposing each family to have, on an average, four children.

Sir William Young said, he thought the objection of an honourable Baronet (*Sir John Rous*) would be done away by the discretionary power it was proposed to vest in magistrates for regulating the price of labour. They would, no doubt, take into their consideration not only the price of corn, but of every other kind of provisions, and make their regulations accordingly.

Mr. Whitbread jun. agreed to adopt any suggestion that could render his purpose more effectual, and to correct an observation of one honourable gentleman (*Sir Charles Bunbury*), he stated, that in many parts of the kingdom the farmers did not deserve any blame, as they had voluntarily increased their labourers' wages, although they were unable, consistent with their own necessary profits, from the cultivation of their farms to raise them proportionately to the price of corn. He observed, moreover, that however liberal the farmers might be, it was peculiarly distressing to the labourer, who had toiled hard from Monday morning to Saturday night, for the bare means of existence, at last to be obliged to be indebted to the bounty of his master for it. In ordinary times perhaps the employer is indebted to the labourer, and therefore, in extraordinary times it might be said the obligation should be reciprocal. He wished, however, to decide in behalf of the labourer, and therefore in extraordinary times, he should refer the regulation of wages to the magistrates of the district, while in ordinary times the Bill he should bring in would be merely a dead letter.

Mr. Lechmere bestowed many encomiums on the honourable gentleman for his motion. He was sorry that it had been introduced

introduced in so thin a House; but, from the respectability of those who were present, he said he was convinced that it would not be less effectual. He deplored the calamities resulting from the war; calamities which added incredibly to the manifold distresses of the poor. Every man, who brought forward any proposition for the relief of the industrious part of the community, in his opinion deserved the applause of his country. The labouring class of the community were the cultivators of the ground, and those who produced the fertility which was beneficial to society. Mr. Lechmere declared that any measure of the kind, notwithstanding that it might, in some degree, affect individuals, yet as it aimed at alleviating the distresses of the poor should have his hearty support.

The motion was then put, and carried *nem. con.*

—Mr. Whitbread, Sir C. Bunbury, Mr. Curwen, Sir John Rous, Mr. Honeywood, Mr. Sheridan, &c. &c. were ordered to prepare and bring in the same.

CIRCULATION OF GRAIN.

Mr. Ryder moved, that the Bill to prevent any obstruction to a free circulation of corn and grain might be read a first time.

Mr. Sheridan said the Bill might be a proper measure, and did not wish to oppose it on any particular principle, farther than what a constitutional jealousy warranted him to entertain. The laws at present existing were, he conceived fully adequate to the ends proposed by the Bill. He moved that the Bill be printed, in order to give gentlemen an opportunity of considering it.

Mr. Ryder said he was not in the least surprised at the jealousy of the Honourable Gentleman respecting any measure which tended to prevent or restrain tumultuous assemblies; he begged leave however to inform him, that the existing laws were deemed inadequate, because doubts were entertained whether they could apply precisely to the prevention of the obstruction to a free passage of grain within the kingdom, being enacted expressly against obstructions to the exportation of it.

Mr. Sheridan said, that notwithstanding the sarcasm of the Right Hon. Gentleman, he had a right to be jealous of every measure which tended to increase the penalties of the statutes, and that the exercise of that right was perfectly constitutional. He again declared that he believed the laws in being were sufficient to prevent any man, or body of men, from assaulting others in the carriage of grain, especially when they came to force open the sacks, and steal the flour from them.

Mr. *Ryder*, in explanation, said, that the report of the law officers had been printed and laid before the House, and in that report, they had stated it as their opinion, that the laws as they at present stood, could not apply to obstructions of an internal conveyance.

The Bill was ordered to be printed.

Mr. *Sheridan* moved that the order should be discharged against such defaulters as appeared in their places before Tuesday, December 1, among whom were Mr. Honeywood and Mr. William Smith. The orders were accordingly discharged.

The order of the day was then read for receiving the report of the Committee to prevent the distillation of spirits from malt, &c. for a limited time. The report to be brought up.

PETITIONS.

Mr. *Sheridan*, after a few introductory words, presented against the Bills, a petition from the cordwainers, hatters, carpenters, joiners, smiths, printers, bookbinders, staymakers, painters, weavers, &c. &c. of London, Westminster, and the Borough of Southwark, signed by 15,000. He said, he might with confidence affirm that had the petition remained for signatures a few days longer, it would have been signed by more than 50,000; as the petition contained the real sentiments of the people, and as the number of signatures was highly respectable, he thought the House would not be disposed to pay less attention to it. Ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. *Sheridan* took notice of a declaration made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the present Bills did not affect the industrious or working part of the community. The Hon. Gentlen as he declared was much mistaken; he held in his hand a petition from the *working bakers*, which, notwithstanding the shortness of time allowed, had already been signed by 1000 of that industrious and useful description of men.—Presented, and ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. *Sheridan* stated, that, notwithstanding the obstacles which had occurred, he had received a petition from the inhabitants of Birmingham, signed by 4000. If time had been given, he was assured that the signatures would have amounted to nearly ten times the number. It ought, at the same time, to be mentioned, that the petitioners had met with the greatest opposition from the agents of government, who had been active to misrepresent and confound the tendency of their proceedings: that this spirit of illiberality had advanced to such a height, that the proprietors of newspapers, fearful of the consequences, refused to insert their advertisements, and that they could

could find none who would print or distribute hand bills for the meeting. The petition was then read, and Mr. Sheridan moved, that it lie on the table. When

Sir Edward Knatchbull rose, not he said to oppose the motion, but to caution the House against the belief that the petition before them contained the real sense of the people of Birmingham. Sir Edward stated, that the majority of the inhabitants of that place were favourable to the Bills. While he was on his legs, he would take the opportunity to mention, that the petition from Rochester, presented to the House in his absence against the Bills, did not contain the real sentiments of the inhabitants. It was stated, that the petition had been signed by all freemen, when, in fact, the signatures of the freemen did not exceed 100 in number. As they amounted to between 30 and 40,000, no man could pretend to say that the petition was expressive of the sentiments of the freemen. He was also fully persuaded, that the majority of the 1500 who had signed the petition, were ignorant of the nature of its contents. The conduct of the chief magistrate of Rochester appeared to him, Sir Edward said, to be highly reprehensible on that occasion; a procession was suffered through the town on that day, that was a disgrace to it; the effigy of a reverend and most respectable * prelate was carried through the streets on an ass, and publicly burnt. The church itself was insulted. Many, who signed the petition, were the conductors of that procession; they paraded before the doors of persons belonging to the Cathedral Church, and then burnt the effigy. He could not, therefore, but conclude, that those magistrates who suffered this procession to take place were culpable in the extreme.

Mr. *Henrywood* said, that it was not for want of respect or attention, that his Honourable Colleague had not proper notice given him that such a petition was to be presented, but because he himself knew nothing of it till it was sent to him; and on account of the amazing rapidity with which the Bills were hurried through the House, he was desired to deliver it soon. He had called upon his Honourable Colleague to apprise him of it; but he could not meet with him; and the urgency of the occasion would not admit of delay. The meeting, however, as he before stated to the House, was regular; and, notwithstanding the reflection thrown upon the chief magistrate of Rochester, he would assert, that his conduct had been bold and proper in coming forward at such an alarming crisis like an independent man. The recorder also (Mr Longley) was as pure and peaceable a character as the honourable baronet.

* The Bishop of Rochester.

With respect to the procession, perhaps it would have been better if it had been omitted. About the time that the procession took place, Mr. Honeywood said, he arrived at Rochester. The people having by some means received intelligence of his being on the road, assembled at the other end of Chatham, and begged his permission to attend him, and draw him without horses to his inn. This he declined, being apprehensive that some misconstruction would be put upon it; and he passed through Chatham, as usual, attended by the people only, who behaved with the utmost decorum. When he came to the entrance of Rochester, however, they took his horses from the carriage, and drew him to the inn, where he addressed them from the step, and exhorted them to depart in good order; and in less than ten minutes they had entirely dispersed, leaving the streets of Rochester as quiet as the bar of the house then was. Some time after he heard a huzza, and upon looking out of the window, he saw some boys leading an ass, with no common figure upon it; and there the matter, as far as he knew, ended. He had occasion to be at Rochester again, when he was informed that the figure on the ass had been burnt; but he heard of no other irregularity; nor had he ever heard till then that any of the people who signed the petition were concerned in the procession, which he was much inclined to disbelieve. Respecting that procession, however, he had to state, that some hand-bills were afterwards distributed, one of which he had not about him; he thanked his honourable colleague for having lent him one, wherein the mayor, recorder, and two other magistrates, expressed their disapprobation of the procession. It would have been better if the honourable baronet had attended the House when the petition was presented, he was glad however that he had then given him an opportunity to explain.

Sir Edward Knatchbull said, it was not his intention to throw the slightest censure on the chief magistrate, or the petitioners, as assisting in the procession. He could not however avoid taking notice that the name of Mr. Mancroft, a respectable magistrate of Rochester, had been put to the petition, who was not, as he himself had been informed by Mr. Mancroft, at that time in the place.

Mr. *Honeywood* again vindicated the conduct of the mayor, who had been uncommonly active, he said, to prevent any disturbance, and who did not know of the procession till it was over.

Sir John Mordaunt called the attention of the House to the motion then before it, by declaring that he had received a letter,

ter, stating, that the petition from Birmingham, just presented, did not contain the sense of the majority of the inhabitants and from whom it had been obtained. The respectable inhabitants he was convinced, entertained a very different opinion from the lower orders, with whom the petition before the House originated on the fallacious ground of their having been induced to believe that a petition for peace was connected with a petition against the Bills.

Mr. *Sheridan* admitted that the petition, being signed by only 4000, did not express the sense of the majority of the inhabitants. The reason of its being subscribed by no more was however evident. The greatest influence, as he had before stated, had been used to prevent any notice being given of its meeting. No public paper would receive the advertisement; nor could any one be prevailed on to print the hand-bills necessary on such an occasion. With regard to the Honourable Baronet, who had so pleasantly introduced the Rochester story, he might have gone not very far from that place; and, with more propriety, have amused the House with a Canterbury tale. The argument of the Honourable Baronet was rather of a curious nature; in order to shew that the petition from Birmingham did not convey the general sense of the inhabitants, he had adduced, as a proof, that the petition from Rochester was not expressive of the sentiments of the majority of the people there. The effigy that was carried in procession, and burnt, was meant to represent a person, who, it was reported, had declared, that the people had nothing to do with the laws, but to obey them. The person alluded to was, he believed, the Bishop of Rochester; though he could not, for his part, give credit to the report. If such a doctrine, however, had been maintained, it was not in the least extraordinary that it should produce such an effect.

Sir Edward Knatchbull rose to explain again, and said that he did not mean to throw any reflection on the persons who signed the petition, but he thought the mayor reprehensible in suffering the procession.

Mr. *Sheridan* observed that this was an extraordinary explanation; all that he could understand by it was, that either the Hon. Baronet thought there was no harm to burn a bishop, and therefore did not mean to reflect on the persons who permitted it, or else there was harm, and those persons, who permitted the act were implicated in it.

Mr. *Fox* condemned the indecent procession that had taken place, and the unjustifiable ridicule or indignation expressed against the learned prelate. When Gentlemen condemned those

those scenes of impropriety, he wished they would act uniformly, and avow the same sentiments when he and his friends suffered from the odium of the people. It was the recollection of some strong facts which led him to reflect on the difference of time and situation. He remembered well, that when, by some misconception, he himself had incurred public odium, the indignation of the people was expressed in all the various forms which ingenuity could suggest. Nothing was applied to him personally; but the unfortunate animal which bore his name, experienced the height of their resentment. He himself never complained on the occasion; neither had he any advocates to stand forward in his defence; but he was neither a commissioner (Proby) nor a prelate, and consequently unworthy of notice.

In reflecting on these circumstances, he recollected with the utmost indignation the insidious treatment which another person (dear to science and philosophy) had experienced at Birmingham. "By a public outrage (which history will record as an eternal disgrace to this country) that learned gentleman, said Mr. Fox, who possesses all the social and mental qualities in the most perfect state, was driven from his native country, to which he was so great an ornament, and obliged to seek an asylum in America. Need I mention his name? I mean Dr. Priestly. He was not only exposed to public odium, but the bleeding heart of an animal was inclosed in his effigy, transixed with a pike, and carried about to various quarters; the humane conductors of this savage scene exclaiming, "This is the manner in which we punish a traitor!" When gentlemen, therefore, mentioned the insults experienced by one side, they ought to evince equal reprobation of those experienced on the other. But, instead of shewing resentment on such occasions, the best return for these outrages was forbearance and forgiveness. Mr. Fox defended the petitioners, who did not pretend to state the sentiments of the county at large, but merely their own opinions.

Objections had been advanced as to the inhabitants. To remove all ground of cavil, Mr. Fox said, he would adopt the phrase of the undersigned inhabitants being entitled to be considered the petitioners as part of the people of England.

Mr. *William Smith* concurred in opinion with the right honourable gentleman and said, that following the maxims of some gentlemen who had objected to the designation of the petitioners, had he been present, he would have objected to the petition from Bath, because some unfair dealing had been
used

used on the occasion. Most of those whose signatures appeared annexed had been summoned to a meeting for an address to his Majesty; the friends of government, with wonderful dexterity, afterwards introduced a clause in favour of the Bills. The petition, thus framed, could not therefore, with strict propriety, be deemed the sense of the inhabitants of Bath, because the sentiments, by the posterior introduction of the clause, had been perverted and applied in a manner different from the purpose to petition, respecting which, they were assembled.

The Birmingham petition was ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. *Sheridan* said he held in his hand two more petitions; and as objections had been urged against other petitions, because they came from the lower orders, he had to observe, that the same objections were not applicable to those which he was then about to offer. They were two distinct petitions from Warwick; the first containing most loyal sentiments, and congratulating the nation on the escape of his Majesty; and the other in reprobation of the Bills. When he declared that they came not from the lower orders, (which some gentlemen were anxious to condemn) he need only mention, that the first name subscribed was that of Lord Dormer; and the next Dr. Samuel Parr, who, though not a Bishop, possessed every claim which unrivalled worth and unrivalled learning could confer.

Both petitions were received and ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. *Sheridan* next stated, that he had a petition from the inhabitants of the town of Kilmarnock, in Scotland; and he might, he said, without hesitation, affirm, that, on due investigation, it would be found, that the people of that country were as averse to the present unconstitutional measures as the people of England. When entrusted with a plan for the reform of the internal government of the Scotch Burghs, he had acquired a considerable knowledge of the dispositions of the people in the sister-kingdom; and from that information he was ready to declare, that they were totally dissatisfied with the present administration. The hand of power had, however, reduced them to the miserable necessity of a silent and a sullen discontent. Hence some of the ministry inferred, that they were perfectly satisfied, because they were peaceable.

General Macdon informed the House, that if petitions against the Bills were not received from Scotland, there were other causes to be assigned than that the people there gave them

them their approbation. The people were shocked at the system of terror, and were grown timid on account of the severity of the laws, the cruelty of the sentences, and the mode in which punishments were inflicted, upon occasions, in which the judges should have shewn mercy. He was happy that the petition from Kilmarnock had been presented, of which he had before no knowledge, and which supported another from the same part of the kingdom, (from Paisley). The distinction which was made of late between the higher and lower orders of the people he severely reprobated, and observed, that such a distinction was most dangerous to social life, to our beloved Monarch, and the constitution. What tenure was it that the rich held their estates by, but the sufferance of the lower orders of the people? and were not their rents enforced in some degree by law, and their rank in life entirely beholden to that sufferance? Were they not in that House entitled to the people for their seats? Let not, therefore, the lower orders of the people be degraded, calumniated or vilified. He cautioned the House to take care how such opinions got abroad; if once the lower orders of the people were made sensible of these invidious distinctions, as they were the most powerful of the two classes, fatal consequences might ensue.

Mr. *Wilnot* observed, that the expression, "the lower orders of the people," was not introduced by any member of that House in his speech, but conveyed in a letter which was read from Birmingham. He adverted to the petition which had been presented from Coventry, (presented the preceding evening by Mr. Fox) and declared it to be his opinion, that it did not convey the sense of the majority of his constituents: it was a petition, the prayer of which he had said, he could not support.

The *Speaker* wished that gentlemen would attend in their places at the time when petitions were presented from the county, city, or borough, which they represented. The manner in which gentlemen referred to petitions presented on a preceding day, from other places, was highly disorderly and irregular.

Mr. *Fox* rose to vindicate the petitioners of Coventry. If Mr. *Wilnot* had till then known nothing of the petition, it was, he said, his own fault. It was signed by nearly 3000 respectable persons; and from the absence of the honourable member, he had undoubtedly less reason to complain than any other gentleman who discharged his duty by his attention to the business of the day. The petitioners could not find the noble lord his colleague (Lord Eardly); and they therefore waited

waited on him requesting his concurrence, which he refused to give, and, of course, they had then a right to apply to any member they pleased, and they applied to him (Mr. Fox) as a person agreeing with their sentiments. The honourable gentleman, therefore, could not complain that he had not complete notice of it; and, Mr. Fox said, he presented it purposely on the night when the call of the House took place, to give the fairest opportunity for any objection, though another time would have been more agreeable to himself. If the petitioners had expressed sentiments consonant to the honourable gentleman's mind, from him there would have been no cause of animadversion.

Mr. *Wilmet* said, that if he had engrossed the time of the House by his remarks, he had only followed the example of other gentlemen.

Mr. *Francis* reprobated the insidious distinction between the higher and lower orders, which in such a government as ours, was always unjustifiable. If gentlemen complained against the lower orders for their presumption in petitioning against obnoxious Bills, they ought to recollect that people of that description were most interested. The higher orders had many opportunities of obtaining redress of grievances, whereas the lower orders were merely confined to the right of petitioning, which, if they deprived them of, their whole political existence was at an end.

Mr. *Vansittart* defended the distinctions which had been made by some gentlemen between the higher and lower orders. The French, from whom many gentlemen drew their theories, had set out with the doctrine of equality, but they had lately admitted the necessity of distinctions, and adopted them in their new constitution, and how could we —

Sir *Francis Basset* called him to order; and said, that, if conversations foreign to the question were admitted, they would never be able to come to the immediate question.

The petition was ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. *Sheridan* presented a petition against the Bills, from Dunfermline, in Scotland. Ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. *Fox* presented a petition against the Bills from Dartmouth. The boast, therefore, of the honourable gentleman who was one of the Representatives of Devonshire, of the unanimity of the county in favour of the Bills was clearly not founded.

Mr. *Rolle* justified himself in the declarations which he had made. He insisted that the petition which he had received and presented to the House some days before, contained the

sense of the county at large, expressed at a public meeting, convened by public advertisement.

Sir *Francis Basset* called Mr. Rolle to order; and hoped that gentlemen would not be permitted to deviate from the question.

The petition was ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. *Coke*, (of Norfolk) presented a petition from *Yarmouth* against the Bills. As that borough was immediately under the influence of government, many of the inhabitants had not, for obvious reasons, signed it, among whom were the Receiver General, and the officers of the customs; much to the honour of the town, however, many of the inhabitants had surmounted every obstacle by discharging their duty to their country. The petition was ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. *Rolle* presented a petition signed, he said, by hundreds of people in the borough of *South Molton* in *Devonshire*, requesting Parliament to adopt measures for the prevention of seditious meetings.

Mr. *Thornton* presented a petition from the inhabitants of *Colchester* against the Bills.

He took occasion to state, that it was signed by very many of the most respectable persons at that place, that it lay for signature only during the space of seven hours, from a fear that it would get too late to the House, and that it received in that time the sanction of 800 names. He expressed the greatest mortification that he could not join in sentiment with his constituents so far as related to the Bills before the House, but he fully coincided with them in their wishes for a peace, and hoped the house would hereafter come to such resolutions as would open a door for treating at the first favourable opportunity.

Mr. *Sheilan* commended the firmness and candour of the honourable gentleman, and hoped he agreed with his constituents, in their idea of the unexampled rapidity with which the Bills were hurried through the House, and if he did, he hoped that it would prevail with him to urge the necessity of taking a longer time for their consideration.

Mr. *Wilberforce* presented an unanimous petition from the mayor, aldermen, and inhabitants of *Leeds*, for the adoption of measures to prevent seditious meetings.

Lord *John Russell* presented a petition from the city and suburbs of *Winchester* against the Bills, which was signed by a great number of respectable inhabitants, regularly convened.

The Secretary at War brought up Colonel *Hay's* letter of service, dated April 2, 1794, which was ordered to lie on the table.

Mr.

Mr. *Curwen* said, he rose agreeable to the notice he had given on a former day, to propose to the house the delay of one week before they proceeded further with those bills; the proceeding with due deliberation became both the wisdom and justice of the house, and never was so strongly called for on any former occasion; indeed none like it ever was discussed within those walls. He should feel very indifferent to the imputations of wishing to prolong the discussion by vexatious delays, for fortunately for him, he had what would be deemed great authority by the right honourable gentleman, at least, he had that of a right honourable Secretary of State, who he was sorry not to see in his place, and from whose assistance and great abilities he had much to expect in favour of his motion. That right hon. gent. on the first notice for bringing in this Bill, with that manly regard to the liberty of the subject, declared the Bill to be such a measure as ought not to pass unless it met the wishes of the people; and in proof of his sincerity concurred with his right honourable friend in the propriety of a call of the house, which he avowed he had opposed on almost every other occasion, on the ground of a sufficient time not having yet been given to know the sense of the people; he called upon the house to give a fair opportunity for obtaining it. The present was a measure of which they had no precedent or example since the constitution had been established, if he had the power, he would not use it of these Bills on any other ground but those of the general feelings and wishes of the country; if the nation could suffer it, he should think, much as he lamented it, that it was useless to withhold chains from those who had lost the relish and love of liberty.

Such was not, could not be the case with the people of England, it was a gross calumny upon them to suppose it; he should state, as shortly as he could, to the house the reasons which he thought ought to induce them to afford the short respite he required for the country, that their feelings and sentiments might be fairly known. He thought that necessary before, he thought it ten times more so in consequence of what had passed in the late discussion on the Bill, which he said he should notice before he sat down, agreeing with the right honourable Secretary of State, that it would be madness to pass the Bill, unless it accorded with the wishes of the people, and he agreed with him in no other point or view respecting it; nothing but the wild, misguided, misjudging policy of the right honourable gentleman, could ever have brought such measures under discussion, if mischief should ensue, it would be chargeable alone on those who forced it upon them, and

he could not suppose the nation so lost to every manly feeling that they would quietly and tamely part with their liberties at the *imperial mandate of a minister*. The right honourable gentleman would learn, and learn, he trusted to his cost, that Englishmen are not to be insulted with impunity. As far as the sense of the country had yet been taken, it had been almost unanimous in the reprobation of these measures, an honest indignation had been raised, which had seldom if ever attended any other measure, and well it might, for none ever so strongly called for it; let them examine for a moment what were the petitions on the other side; few if any avowed their approbation of the particular measures before the house, they all took it for granted that the existing laws were not sufficient to guard the sacred person of his Majesty from insult, and called upon them to render them so; was this really the case, was there a man in that house who would not heartily concur with them? To these gentlemen he said, "first let us have it proved the laws are not sufficient, in what predicament do the other petitions stand, they are from chartered bodies or persons represented in this house. The rights of these gentlemen are not attacked, that they should be indifferent or perhaps not displeased to have still greater privilege than the monopoly than they at present enjoy, renders their approval of little weight." One individual under the same circumstances with those gentlemen, appearing as petitioners weighed a thousand times more, his testimony was against himself, the testimony of a party was the most conclusive that could be had. One of the most odious and obnoxious principles of the Bill, was the diabolical attempt to establish distinctions between different classes of subjects, and this principle however gentlemen reprobate it, had been pretty well avowed by the kind of arguments which had been used in support of the Bill. If there had been as little alacrity on the part of the people, as he contended there had been zeal to express to them their sentiments, it might well have been accounted for from the particular circumstances of the case. Those who from habit, perhaps from situation, have usually taken a lead in bringing forward the sentiments of the country, had not a common interest with the bulk of the nation—"bulk do I say, with the great collective body of the people; a further time in justice should be given, if there was no other ground to claim it, he might plead the unrivalled popularity which that right honourable gentleman has possessed, as a further reason for delay; the effects of that blind confidence has led to all our present situation of unparelled calamity.

Changes

Changes of opinion were at all times effected with difficulty, and especially opinions formed on the best feelings of the heart; there was a period beyond which credulity itself could not reach—the country felt it, and for the first time had began to open their eyes to the ruin that awaited them. They began to discover that blinded by alarm, they had been led to a concurrence in a destructive and ruinous war, a war which the good sense that rescued them from the effects of a Spanish and Russian Armament, would equally have protected them again, had it been left to its fair operation. To those fears, to those alarms the nation was again called to divert its attention from the surrender of the ground-work of its liberties, reluctantly had the country become sensible of its danger, as far as its opinion had been taken, an honest indignation has marked the design, and would they doubt an equal energy and ardour would mark the deliberations of every other part of the kingdom; would that house hazard the passing the Bill contrary to the declared sense of the nation? It dared not, it would not, because it ought not to do it. An honourable gentleman (Mr. Wilberforce) professed to believe this outcry was but a pretext to displace a minister. “Grant it as true, as I believe it false, the measure would be fully justified; on what ground is it that we accuse this minister, of an attempt to avail himself of the power and influence of his situation to destroy the constitution. I trust the country will feel the full force of his delinquency, and that the united voice of the people will call upon the crown to dismiss for ever a minister who has forfeited every claim to confidence. Proud should he be to concur in raising this spirit, and rousing the country from the apathy in which it has too long remained, to the feelings of honest indignation at so daring an attack, such feelings would be the best proof of the value and estimation in which Britains hold their liberty. I should proudly exult in hearing the voice of the nation present itself at the foot of the throne, with those sentiments of manly warmth and affection so natural to the character of Englishmen, addressing a beloved monarch; Sire, we heard with delight your assurance on the first day of this Session of Parliament, that you confided with perfect security in the affections of your people, that the calamities of war, and the iron hand of famine had been borne with patience and resignation, that the blood and treasure of your people had not been spent in vain, that it had produced peace at home, and wrought a thorough change in the opinions of our enemies; forgetting the painful sensation that our loyalty had ever been doubted,

doubted, they were sensible only to the exultation and joy of possessing your returned confidence in our attachment to your person and government, they looked with well grounded hope to the speedy return of the blessings of peace. But, what is our alarm and disappointment, when we now find the whole nation is again to be treated as if disaffected to your person, and enemies to our constitution; you have been deceived, and we basely calumniated. To doubt of our affection and loyalty is attempted? Sir, our interest and yours are inseparable, the blow that levels one, must destroy the other; is there a man from one end of the kingdom to the other, who does not feel himself equally insulted with your Majesty, in the late abominable conduct of a lawless mob? Deign to attend to your people, know you reign in their hearts, wound them not by distrust, give a fair display of that affection you feel for them, shew them that love and veneration which they know glows in your breast for the laws and liberties of your country, permit not its benign influence to be intercepted by an ambitious and wicked minister, whose interests are not yours, nor your people's; and there is not a drop of blood that flows in their veins you may not command in defence of your sacred person and government; dismiss from your councils a man who has calumniated your people, who has neither the power nor the will to restore confidence: Such I confidently hope said Mr. Curwen will be the conduct of the people. He agreed with the right honourable gentleman in wishing a fair and decided opinion on the conduct of those who support, and those who oppose these measures; they were fairly at issue, he looked with confidence for the decision, they were accused of misrepresentation, strange indeed said he has been our conduct, who intreat this house to grant further time, which must not only destroy its effects, but expose us to the contempt and resentment of the country; if the supporters of these measures are serious in their charges, it is their interest to close with my proposition." He deprecated as unworthy of a good cause, every attempt to misrepresent, come from what quarter it will, but he would not believe they owed to such means the numerous petitions on the table. The delay he proposed would fully ascertain that to the satisfaction of the house, and leave no doubt what are the feelings of the people. The consequences which must infallibly result from these measures, were infinitely more alarming than at first met the eye. Rob the people of their right of petitioning, take from them their interest and connection with the democratic part of the constitution,

stitution, and you destroy with their consequence their freedom, and with theirs your own; he said the consequence of any body of men could not be taken away without their freedom following it. What would be the situation of this house, when they had drawn a line of separation, which renounced the support and controuling influence of twelve parts out of thirteen of the whole people? If the full force of all the united body of the nation had been barely sufficient to maintain to them the due influence in the scale; what would be their situation when they rested upon the represented part only. Three or four hundred thousand were the most extended calculation out of six millions. If they renounced the controuling influence of the people, if they wantonly destroyed the ties which had united us, can we, ought they to expect, to look for their support; an act of such injustice must degrade them in their estimation, and make them view with satisfaction their term of debasement and degradation. Yes, having nothing to hope from them, they would leave them to conduct a struggle, which had in it nothing to engage their affection, or to affect their interest; they would then hasten to what he was not without apprehension and fear of, they were fast verging to a mere Register Office to record the burthens of the people. The Bill must in its effects alter the whole constitution; popular opinion had restrained and counteracted the power and influence of corruption, take that away, and ineffectual would be the struggle. The existence of the House of Commons depended upon the united interest of the whole body of the nation. That increased corrupt influence of the crown, together with the torrent of honor which had of late years inundated that house, and deprived the democratic part of the constitution of such a weight of property, called upon them, if they valued the existence of the constitution, to cherish every prop and support to help them to maintain as their just and necessary influence. The Bill will have the odious effect of having for its mark, the bulk of the people in contradiction to the few who were already in possession of the monopoly of the elective franchise. It wanted the first principle of law, that all should be equally the objects of it. A free country could alone exist where there was freedom of speech, and freedom of the press; when these are gone, all that remains must soon follow. To advert to the grounds on which they were called upon to pass this Bill, a proof of the existing circumstances which required or justified any measure had been denied them, and they were called upon to give their sanction

to it upon general notoriety, on which they differed most widely; and yet ministers, if they were in possession of information to justify any proceeding at all, choose to withhold it. The principle of former legislators was first to consider the nature and extent of the measure that required their interference, and adapt their remedy to the disease; but their rule of legislation was to be governed by the will of a minister.

He thought the experience they have had should teach them a greater degree of caution, a Committee of parliament did declare a traitorous correspondence to exist, repeated verdicts of juries negatived that fact, and every honest man in the country rejoiced at it. It was this interference which he blamed on a former occasion; had the laws been left to take their course, a proper punishment would have followed. Should that house not doubt a little its own feelings and disposition, too easily to credit every thing which led to the confirmation of plots and disaffection. As a proof of it, he said, he should instance the information of an honourable member, who, he was satisfied had no intention to mislead the house, when he informed them, that the doctrine of king-killing had been preached at Copenhagen-house, but how was the fact? Alarmed indeed should he have been, if there had been a man wicked enough, or such a body of men so lost to the feelings, that ought and do actuate Englishmen, to have been passive auditors of such doctrine. No such thing did happen, that meeting passed with perfect decorum and order, that abominable hand-bill was said to have been distributed there; had government no reporters there, was it not the interest of those gentlemen to destroy the effect of the order and regularity of the meeting, for such persons can exist but in times of suspicion? Would it have been safe for any but themselves to have been the distributors? How comes it if otherwise, the persons concerned were not apprehended, would these reporters have been ashamed for once to act an open and honourable part? If they were to judge which side had the most interest, he should be authorized in attributing it to them sooner than any other. He might notice, as shewing the disposition of the house, the patience with which it endured a story of a worthy Alderman, which, when noticed, was so contemptible as to meet the reprobation of the whole house. He was much obliged to a noble lord, who on a former night entertained the house with such a mass of, what should he call it, absurdity and nonsense as called forth in his breast astonishment and indignation, that it could be supposed possible

possible that affection and loyalty of a whole country to its government could be destroyed by such treason to God, the constitution, and common sense. He thought such productions could only have found an author and admirer within the walls of Bedlam. Upon the extension of treason he should say but a few words, the most clear and absolute necessity would alone induce him to increase the penal statutes, satisfy that severe penalties, and especially disproportionate ones, tended rather to the escape than punishment of offenders. He could not have forgot the conduct of a right honourable gentleman upon a former treason Bill, where a treason was to have been made a felony; on its being objected that the accused would be in a less advantageous situation, and particularly so with respect to the advantage he would have drawn from having a list of his witnesses previous to his trial; how was that treated by the right honourable gentleman? He said, that might be so swelled by a cloud of witnesses as to render it perfectly nugatory; with such opinions and sentiments of the criminal jurisprudence of the country, he felt himself fully justified in doubting of every measure that should come to them through the channel of that right honourable gentleman. In the name of the people of England, he intreated the house not to preclude them an opportunity of being heard against these Bills at their bar; if the voice of the people was to stop these Bills, tell the people not to owe it to any other branch of the legislature; nor place them in that situation of seeming indifferent to their interest. An honourable gentleman (Mr. Wilberforce) asked if they loved peace, might he not with as much justice and propriety ask that honourable gentleman, if he loved liberty, and could have been sincere in his endeavours to obtain freedom for thousands who never tasted of its blessings, and now be a friend to measures which would, if carried, establish despotism in a country which considered liberty as the first of its possessions? Was not such conduct and were not such insinuations unworthy of gentlemen? To the consistency of mens characters? We ought alone to appeal for the motives of their conduct; gentlemen call *bear*; to that test he was not afraid to apply. Since he had the honour of a seat in that house, he had exercised an unbiassed opinion, nor had his attachment to men warped him from those principles which hitherto had, and he hoped always would decide his conduct. He subscribed most heartily to the doctrine laid down, by his honourable friend, Mr. Fox, upon a former night, that if they forced these Bills upon the great bulk of the nation against their will, resistance would be no longer a question of moral duty but of prudence; contrast this doctrine, and

then let the nation judge whether the friends or opposers of these Bills are the most entitled to their confidence. A right honourable gentleman (the Secretary at War) talked of employing *avigour more than law*, what does this mean? Is he so little acquainted with the stuff of which an English heart is composed, that he can suppose those who have been the ornament of their country, who have been proved to shed their blood in its defence, would forget the love of liberty they sucked in with their mother's milk, and become the instruments of enslaving their fellow subjects? It was calumniating those brave men to suppose it. One tyrant made the experiment, and might the example deter a repetition of the attempt: restore to them the blessings of peace, and prosperity would naturally follow; let them change their measures, respect the constitution, correct the abuses that afford but too just grounds for complaint, and he trusted they should have nothing to fear from either anarchy or despotism. Deeply impressed with the awful crisis of the moment, he felt it his duty to submit to the consideration of the house, the propriety of adjourning for a week the further discussion of this Bill.

Mr. *Harrison* rose, he said, from a principle of propriety, to second the motion. He declared it to be his opinion, as far as he could judge, that the people of the country were totally averse to the Bills, and he lamented that a right honourable gentleman (Mr. Dundas), whose concurrence in that idea, he should have expected, was absent. Time, he thought, should be given to obtain the opinions of the people in the remote parts of the kingdom. It was a measure that ought not to be adopted by ministers, without they meant to insult the people, and alienate their affections from parliament. It was a measure in his mind not to be endured; it was abominable, destructive, and a daring violation of the liberties of the country. Admitting the arguments of ministers in their full extent, and even allowing their calumnious assertions to be true, the measure ought nevertheless to be indignantly rejected, as a measure subversive of the Bill of Rights and the constitution. It was, he said, strange that ministers should at this critical period, venture to introduce a measure that tore away the security of the subject, and destroyed the great charter of the nation, as established by the Bill of Rights.

Mr. *Wallace* considered that a certain proportion of respect was due to the opinions, the wishes, and petitions of the people, when they were fairly and honestly expressed; with regard to the petitions then before that house, it had been
incontestibly

incontestibly shewn, that they were obtained in various parts of the kingdom by the grossest calumnies, and the foulest misrepresentations; he therefore wished them to be discussed in a Committee as soon as possible, in order that they might be printed, and the people be enabled to form an accurate opinion of what they had to expect from them. He understood what gentlemen meant when they called for procrastination, and were against having the measure made more palatable, it would not, they well knew, occasion that opposition it had met with. Their conduct, when modified, shewed they were not averse to illegal resistance, so far as it was revolutionary, but not connected with what produced the revolution in 1688. That measure was attained without any violation of the constitution; gentlemen on the opposite side of the house, however, went further, and directly attacked that constitution respecting which they affected so much tenderness. They endeavoured by their language, to influence the freedom of debate, to raise the sword, and light up the flame of civil war. The exertion and propagation of the principles of the London Corresponding Society, by Citizen Lee, were, he insisted on it, clearly connected with the insults offered to the King. The attempt of ministers to defeat their machinations gave offence to some gentlemen; he was, nevertheless, convinced, that by adopting the present measures, the country would be saved. It had been advanced by an honourable gentleman, that it was immaterial whether the nation degenerated into a state of anarchy or of despotism; those gentlemen, however, who opposed the Bill, would not find in a state of anarchy protection for that property which they boasted gave them as large a share of interest in the welfare of the country as others, and which might not be the case if the present necessary measures of his Majesty's ministers were not adopted. He reminded Mr. Curwen of having stated in a former debate, that those clubs and societies proceeded to such an extent as to afford him some uneasiness; notwithstanding which, he had that day expressed his fears for the constitution, when mild and necessary measures were taken in order to counteract their mischievous intentions. Mr. Wallace declared, he would not say that any of the parties who assembled at Copenhaogen-house, actually put the instrument into the hand of the miscreant who attacked the Sovereign; but he would assert, that the language used at that meeting was likely to influence and work on the minds of the ignorant, and was calculated to produce outrages against the laws. It was, he admitted, undeniable that the best security of a British

Sovereign, was to live in the hearts of his people; and his present Majesty, it was on all hands agreed, enjoyed in a pre-eminent degree the affection of his subjects; even that, however, could not protect him from the hand of the conspirator, who, in aiming a blow at the King, aimed it also at every subject in the kingdom.

Mr. *Whitbread* pleaded guilty to the charge made against his honourable friend who made the motion, and confessed his object was merely to create delay, for the purpose of obtaining more petitions against it in its present abominable shape. Happy was it for the country, that the constitution of that house had provided forms of deliberation, apparently with a prospective apprehension of the necessity in certain cases, for delay. In those forms, he, with his hon. friends, intended to intrench themselves, and in those forms they would defend their post against the passing of the Bills, in doing which he believed they should also defend the liberties of the country. Every day, every hour, and every moment, that these Bills were delayed from passing into a law, was a day, an hour, and a moment preserved to the freedom of the people. It had been said, that the petitions were obtained in an unfair manner; he denied the fact. Did they not speak the sentiments of the people of England? If they did not speak the sentiments of the people of England, what was it that made ministers so anxious to force the Bills upon them? They had, as far as they were enabled by their privilege of deliberation, by the result of that exercise, firmly persuaded of the dangerous innovation of those measures on the constitution, manifested their abhorrence of the Bills. Some gentlemen had argued, in his opinion, rather indecorously, that the petitions did not speak the sense of those people by whom they were signed; others, and among them a worthy magistrate (Mr. Alderman Lushington) had declared, in rather a sarcastic tone, that they proceeded from the poor, and not from the rich. This was a scandalous and invidious distinction; in his opinion the indigent had more at stake on the present occasion than the opulent; the latter could find the way to redress, when the former were shut out, if not sheltered by the Constitution in preserving to them their inalienable right, the right of petitioning. An honourable gentleman had spoken of the misrepresentation to procure those petitions, but surely he had forgotten, at the same time, the misrepresentations of those persons who supported the Bill. They misrepresented it when they asserted, that it was meant as a guard to defend and protect the liberties of the people; they knew that it was not only a daring attack upon those liberties, but that
such

such was the purpose professedly in view. Ministers, if convinced that the measure needed only to be understood to be adopted, should certainly agree to the motion, from a confidence, that when the people were convinced of the propriety and adequacy of the measure, they would support government by their petitions. It had been insinuated that his honourable friend had disclosed his own intentions and those of his friends, by not wishing the Bill to go into a Committee, for the purpose of suffering it to come before the public in its original and natural garb. To this assertion he had no objection also to plead guilty. He confessed that he was desirous it should go forth to the world in all its natural deformity, to evince to the people what an alarming stretch of power ministers aimed at; and not to let it appear after it had been smoothed down, and fashioned in conformity, in a great measure, to the successful opposition which it had experienced. The voice of the people had the desired effect on ministers: he knew they wished to abandon the measure altogether; they had, indeed, made it a nullity, and adhered to its form because they were determined to preserve the shadow, merely, as they conceived, to sustain their credit; he hoped, however, the futility of the transaction would not be soon forgotten.

They pretended that the Bills were calculated to secure the liberties and Constitution of the country. He was not surprised at such pretences; he knew that it had been the practice of weak politicians, in all ages, while they were secretly undermining any institution, to pretend that they were fixing it on a firmer basis. Had not the axe, the wheel, and the stake, he asked, been used to enforce even the mild religion we professed? He had not the smallest hesitation in affirming that these Bills were of a similar nature, and equal to one of the most despotic measures of the most accursed tyrant upon earth. Instead of beholding the people prosper under a government of freedom, justice, and mercy, they would soon see them sink under a government of tyranny, of persecution, and of blood; aye, of blood; a government of blood! Was there no blood in the Bill? What did it tend to, but the shedding the blood of his Majesty's subjects, when upon such slight grounds it enforced military execution? The Bill was, in his opinion a severe Act: it had been introduced with a solemnity unusual in the annals of this country; and if it were possible to heighten the solemnity of it, it was to be passed into a law without there having been one tittle of evidence produced, without the smallest shadow of necessity having been established.

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That was not all; it did not even extend to the purposes for which it was proposed. A noble Peer (Lord Mornington) had quoted a number of indecent extracts from a variety of pamphlets; would the noble lord, or any of his friends, assert that the Bill would impede the publication of such pamphlets? Certainly not. An honourable gentleman had said, that he could prove the necessity for those coercive measures, and yet he voted against the proof; when he voted against the appointment of a Committee to establish that proof he was possessed of. Where did this proof exist? In the notoriety? It was said it was notorious, that doctrines were preached upon a certain day, in a certain public meeting, and that afterwards an outrage was committed, in which the preaching and the practice were connected. Was this reported so? No! Then the persons who were employed to report what passed at that meeting did not do justice. The people who composed that public meeting contend that they have been calumniated, and offer to be heard by counsel. Until they who were so ready to refute, therefore, shall have been refuted, there can be no conviction. But the house and the country is called upon to give faith to these assertions. Let the house mark upon whom the faith of these assertions must depend: upon the ministers of the crown. Was it not notorious that those very ministers had before deceived the country? Was it not notorious that a part of them got into power by giving a vital stab to the constitution; and was it not notorious that another part was the loudest to cry out upon it? Was it not notorious that they spread alarms of treason throughout the country which they could not prove? and, not to go through a string of facts, did not their credulity, to call it by no worse a name, endanger the life, liberties, and reputation, of a number of individuals, whom, after they have kept for seven months in confinement, they have been obliged to release for want of proof? Every man who heard him, Mr. Whitbread said, must be aware, that he alluded to those unfortunate men, whose deplorable situation had so repeatedly been mentioned, and never contradicted, who had been seized, confined, and calumniated, on a charge of conspiracy to assassinate the King. Ought so gross a calumny as the preamble of that Bill was upon the societies to be suffered? He had heard it said, that it was not a calumny, but a charge: these assertions were perfectly in the manner of the high inquisition, and he should not be surprised if the torture soon should be adopted to force the accused to a confession. [*A violent exclamation of No! No! No!*] Mr. Whitbread declared it gave him some satisfaction to find that the sensations of the house revolted at the idea of such

such tyranny; he would ask, however, if the London Corresponding Society had been guilty of such acts as he should not stand to defend, if they had gone to greater lengths than they ought to have done, and had transgressed against the constitution, was it wise or prudent to brand them with infamy, and exclude them from the pale of society? Ought they not rather to endeavour to bring them back to a proper love of the Sovereign and the Constitution? It had been said, that the London Corresponding Society had at last condescended to address the King, and petition that house. Instead of such sarcastic remarks, would it not have been better to have received their petition with cordiality and respect, and to have welcomed men once again to the safe paths from which they had wandered? What were they going to do? They were going to punish the whole of his Majesty's subjects for the indiscretion of a few, and they would not allow the delay of one week to put stronger restrictions into execution. Did it defeat the purpose? certainly not; for while they were deliberating they were surrounded by an army, and a military force was ready to march to any part of the metropolis the moment an attack should be made. He would ask the right honourable gentleman, in the violence of his zeal, whether he wished any additional power, and whether the enactment of the Bill could give it? He would ask him also, whether there has been any tumultuous meetings in the metropolis or the kingdom to justify it? When he assumed these premises, what were the enactments? such as, to use the words of his right honourable friend, "if carried by the influence of a corrupt majority against the sense of the great mass of the people of England, and made a part of the practical government of the country, resistance will no longer be a question of morality and duty, but of prudence."

An honourable gentleman had said, these are not revolution doctrines, because they were only used in resisting a tyrant; but he would not ask by whom they were used, nor against what tyrant, for a tyranny cannot be less tyrannical, because it is the tyranny of an Act of parliament. The people of England were so much the better then than at present, because they were not made accomplices in their own oppression, and because they had not then, as at present, no redress but in the assertion of their own rights. Public meetings were said to be open even if the Bill passed. That he denied; suppose, for instance, the meeting the other day in the Common Hall had been posterior to the passing of the Bill, and the members should afterwards say, that the question was not only not fairly stated,

stated, but that the structure prevented it from being generally understood, could there be any doubt, when a weak or wicked magistrate had been hooted by the populace, and made such a declaration, that the people would have an opportunity to meet again?

To put another instance respecting a motion of an honourable gentleman, with whom he had then the only opportunity of concurring—for the abolition of the Slave trade—if such a Bill had been in force prior to the meetings in support of that motion, would it not have been said, that the Slave trade was established by law, and that such meetings were held for the purpose of introducing French anarchy and confusion into the colonies? He knew not whether he should transgress the forms of the House, if he said that sheriffs were sometimes notoriously picked out to answer the purpose of elections; and if such a bill be passed, might not sheriffs be picked out every year to answer the purposes of a corrupt administration? He denied also that it would not interfere with private families, for one enactment was, that a magistrate might enter any house where, upon information upon oath, he shall have reason to suspect a seditious meeting or discourse, upon which he would not, he said, enlarge, as it was too obvious to need a comment.

Who could then support a Bill liable to such objections? Were they afraid of the meeting at Copenhagen House? If the Bill was not to operate as they asserted, such meetings were not prohibited. How could rational beings stumble on such absurdities? Every measure of the present minister, his involving the country in a disastrous war, his defeats and disgraces, the blunders of himself and his colleagues, and their prodigality, rendered them unpopular, but in no serious mind operated to the insult of the sovereign. The Bills, in fact, were calculated for the security of ministers, and not that of the King, on whom they meant to cast the odium of their misconduct and disgraces. Who could read the atrocious libel pronounced by the Secretary of War innocent in its nature, without perceiving that chain of facts which led to the present despotic measures? Who could see without grief, a distinguished leader in the present cabinet, who had been the principal cause of exciting the American war, and the calamities that followed? When the Jacobites attempted to assassinate King William, no such laws were brought forward as the present. Englishmen should recollect that at the close of the American war, the corrupt ministers of the crown were dismissed, conformable to the voice of the people. He should be glad to have

part of the wickedness of these Bills taken away, rather than they should be enacted in their present state; but he abhorred the detestable principles of them completely. This was not all; he suspected they were preparatory to more vigorous measures, since it had been already doubted by one of the ministers (Mr. Windham) whether they went to a sufficient extent, and whether something beyond them would not hereafter be found to be expedient. He thought, therefore, that they would soon be followed up by something more arbitrary. The country, however, might remain stupified for a time; he trusted, nevertheless, that it was asleep, not dead; the people would soon rouse themselves; and then the consequence would be, that, either by one convulsive effort they would produce a revolution; or, if they do not rouse themselves, what has been so long prophesied will be fulfilled, *The Euphantasia* of the Constitution.

Mr. *W. Addington* rose and argued in support of the Bills: he said, that however gentlemen might at present declaim against the Bills, and boldly assert, that they were subversive of the constitution, he begged to remind them, that it was by remedying evils occasionally existing, that our ancestors had been enabled to hand down that constitution to their posterity. The atrocious attack on his Majesty, on which he was glad to find there was but one sentiment, was not only an attack upon the King, but, considering the time and place, it was an attack also upon the Lords and Commons, and that attack apparently the effect of a dark, diabolical and premeditated conspiracy. Clubs and conspiracies it was never to be forgotten had overturned the monarchy of France. What was it but a club that insulted, imprisoned, and brought to the block, the unfortunate Louis XVI. If gentlemen would look to France, they would see that the Convention which was erected by these clubs, had, by one of their last acts, overturned the whole of the club system? and immediately after that overthrow, followed the establishment of a form of government, which, being in some measure founded upon reasonable principles, enabled his Majesty to state from the Throne, the first day of the session, the probability of treating with them? Destructive these clubs had been in France, and destructive they promised to be in this country. What then did government want? The Bills gave no power to the executive government, nor to the House of Lords or Commons: they had, indeed, placed a reliance on magistrates for the purpose of procuring public peace; and whatever gentlemen might say, there were no men in the country more to be

respected, nor more independent, than the magistrates in general. The Bill was not a Bill that looked to punishment, to pains and penalties; it was chiefly preventive in its object, preventive in its provisions; if it did not pass, in vain had the legislature suspended the *Habeas Corpus* Act; in vain had they passed the Treasonable Correspondence Bill; in vain had they taken any measure to preserve the state. Mr. Addington concluded by declaring that he thought the Bills could not have a more proper title, than that of the means of enabling ministers to hand down to posterity the British constitution whole and unimpaired.

Mr. Lambton began with declaring, that his attachment to the monarchy, was as strong as that of any man. He was ready to protect the Sovereign from every insult, for it was a duty co-ordinate with the constitution; he had, however, other duties that were likewise co-ordinate, because they were connected together, and love to the one was inseparable from regard to the other. In his attachment to the King, he must include his duty to the constitution. It was an edifice so delicate and beautiful in its construction, that if the smallest part was removed, the whole would totter and tremble to the foundation. Great as the loyal professions of some gentlemen might be, the British monarchy they must admit was founded on English liberty, and supported by the right of the people. This was a sentiment that "had grown with his growth, and strengthened with his strength." It was one that he hoped would go down with him to the grave, whether it remained locked up in his bosom, or whether he was permitted to enjoy the good old English custom of speaking his thoughts fairly and freely. The paltry documents brought forward by a noble lord, did not, he said, serve to convince him, that either sedition or conspiracy against the king existed; any fool or any spy could have written the book the noble lord had introduced, but no man of common sense would have obtruded on the public what must have defeated his own object. If sedition did exist, he had the authority of the best lawyers for declaring, that the laws were sufficient to punish it. The present Bill appeared to him to be rather calculated to promote sedition, than to prevent it. Coercion ever made converts: and Voltaire had judiciously remarked, that the inquisition made more proselytes than either Calvin or Luther. The present coercive measures would create, he was convinced, more disciples than Thomas Paine, Joel Barlow, or the whole race of republican theorists. Since the year 1792, the measures of administration had made more persons dis-
affected

affected to the government than the poison of French principles. If ministers really wished to stop the progress of that discontent, they ought to employ the means suggested by his honourable and learned friend, (Mr. Erskine); they ought to restore peace and plenty, which would silence the voice of discontent. They ought to remedy notorious abuses, and reform the representation. That, and that only, would be the way to put down seditious assemblies, (as they were called) because it would leave little to be complained of. Such measures would, he was persuaded, have more weight than all the violent Bills with rigorous penalties that ingenuity could devise. A question naturally presented itself, did ministers mean to conciliate or not? Their language to the people had been this: "We have involved you in a war which has been conducted without energy, wasted your blood and treasure upon schemes with little success, and less glory; but do not think we will bend or truckle for favour, apply anodynes to the wounds we have inflicted; behave peaceably; do not venture even to murmur, much less bounce; if you bark, we will silence you; if you bite, we will muzzle you; and if you shake your chains with anger and indignation at your oppressors, we will transport you to Botany Bay for a misdemeanour, or hang you for high treason!"

It had, however, been said, that there were precedents for such measures; from what times were those precedents selected? From the times of Queen Elizabeth, one of the most despotic, though one of the greatest monarchs that ever sat on the throne of Britain. It was the precedent of an act passed by an abject parliament, whom she prohibited under *severe penalties from deliberating on public affairs*, and whose members she arrested on pretence of disobedience to her will. Did ministers think the people would submit to these Bills, or endure such precedents? The parliament of Charles II. had passed the act, which was the other precedent, in the first effusions of their zeal, the year immediately after the restoration, amidst the dread of a powerful unextinguished faction. What was at that time security to the throne, at this was treason to the constitution. Mr. Lambton declared, that he had always understood that it was a maxim of the greatest truth and authority, that tumults and discontents were rare under a good government; and that when they took place, their causes might be traced to mal-administration. Complaint never hurt any but those whose conscience told them that they were guilty. If ministers wished to lessen the number of the discontented, instead of refusing they would

consent, to hear grievances explained. By treating them with contempt, they would drive the people to despair; and, to use the words of a celebrated writer, "might produce a few fits of the ague, which would leave behind a quotidian fever." He hoped they would agree that it was better to stop the disorder, before it proceeded to any desperate extremity.

What, he asked, had been the boasted difference between the British constitution and the old despotism of France? It was this: in England, truth could not be concealed from the king, it made its way to his notice through the medium of a free press, and circulated through all the orders of the state. In other countries, deprived of liberty, the avenues of public investigation were locked up; no grievance, however acutely felt, could be complained of. With us there existed a right to assemble and consider grievances, and obtain information, which might discover bad men; no such right was experienced in despotic countries, their system was so ordered that their rulers might crush those who disapproved of their measures; and consign to the miseries of famine, and the horrors of a dungeon, all who dared to murmur a complaint. How long might this enviable distinction remain? The right of petitioning was paramount to all others. The force that tore it away might rob them of their property. It might be consistent with the government of Turkey, or of Russia, but not with the constitution of England; he therefore cautioned ministers against trying the experiment. He objected particularly to the clause bestowing so much discretionary power upon magistrates, and enlarged upon the consequences of it. The very reason of petitioning required freedom of petitioning. The Bill however took it away. It held out the semblance of a right, which could neither be touched nor felt.

They had been told, that no attempt would be made to prevent the exercise of petitioning were the Bill passed. It ought to be recollected that the exercise of the power of petitioners would then depend only on sufferance; it would no longer be a right. A good minister might not employ it; but what a dreadful engine did it furnish to the views of a corrupt administration! Suppose, for instance, that a meeting of Dissenters was summoned, to petition for the redress of some pressing grievance, and that high church politics were the rage of the day, the meeting might on a sudden be pronounced illegal, the proceedings stopped by the attending magistrate, and, on refusing to disperse, the assembly might be subject to military execution. Of all the attacks which had ever been made upon the liberties of Englishmen, this was,

in his opinion, the most daring, ruinous, and alarming. All the stretches of prerogative under Charles the First, who lost his head, and James the Second, who lost his crown, were but pigmy steps when compared with the gigantic strides of modern despotism. Ship-money, arbitrary exactions, and even the infamous Court of Star Chamber, were trivial to it. Then the right of petitioning existed, by which the people might remonstrate. Had those arbitrary steps been preceded by a Bill similar to the present, they might have been executed with impunity. The English constitution would have been swallowed up for ever. The real grievances from which the discontent arose, was the conduct and the practices of ministers.

Much abuse had been lavished upon the political societies in the kingdom; in his opinion, the greater lay in the conduct of his Majesty's ministers. They had given rise to these societies; they had created jacobins; they had diffused discontent. His sentiments he would not state in his own words, but in those of a distinguished character who had given a just account of the origin of the discontent in the days of Charles the First. Mr. Lambton then read a quotation from a celebrated speech delivered in the house in 1664, (Sir C. Ruddiman's) of which the following is an outline. "His Majesty is much wiser than those who advise him. His ministers have tolled a deadly knell all over the kingdom, and inspired the people with sentiments of disgust and dissatisfaction. Let their conduct speak, and let their actions deliver them. They are not so much concerned for the interests of the country, but they mind nothing but their own. They have spent sums of money, and wasted the blood of the nation, in the pursuit of schemes which terminated in miscarriage and disaster. They add upon one pernicious counsel till they bring things to an extremity, and then they make this extremity the ground for their next proceeding." This, he said, was precisely the character of the present ministers. He did not accuse them of a wicked and premeditated design to sow division in the country, and to establish novel and dangerous distinctions between the different ranks in society, but he was confident that such had been the consequence of their measures. He recommended it to them to desist from this ruinous plan of policy, and to use conciliatory measures with the people, as long as conciliatory measures would be of use. At present they would not fail to cement all classes of persons throughout the kingdom, and unite them against them. Were a poll to be taken

taken throughout England on the question of the continuance of monarchy, he was convinced that there would scarcely be a difference of opinion. As far as his majesty was personally concerned, the people were unanimous in their attachment; but were a poll taken upon the continuance of ministers in their present situation, and upon the political expediency of the measures which they had just adopted, perhaps there might not be the same unanimity of sentiment, that from what he understood of the opinion of the nation, the minister and his friends had little to expect from such a scrutiny, that would redound much either to their advantage or to their honour.

Mr. *Grant* said, that supposing the assertions made use of by Gentlemen on the other side to be well grounded and true—that is to say, supposing it were true, that the measures in agitation trenched, in some degree, on the constitution, it by no means followed, that they ought not in any possible case to be adopted. If, in case of an invasion, measures of a similar nature were deemed expedient, it would not be less unreasonable than in the present case to attribute to them the same consequences. It would be paradoxical indeed to say, that it was by the resistance, and not the attack, that danger was produced. If the Bills, at present the subject of discussion, were brought forward in a time of peace merely as a speculative improvement of the constitution, he would not have the least hesitation in rejecting them. He was by no means inclined to depreciate the benefits which resulted to the people from their ancient privilege of assembling, deliberating, and expressing their sentiments on any public measure. He knew that even legislators sometimes stood in need of certain checks and correctives, and that the voice of the people might and had been known to operate as a salutary controul. Gentlemen had gone but a very little way, indeed, in argument on the measure, when they shewed only that it was a restriction. All government was a restriction laid on, not because it was agreeable, but because it was necessary; so that when Gentlemen objected to these Bills, that they would operate as a restraint, they only left the question where they found it; for, by a parity of reasoning, they might dispose of all kind of social restriction whatsoever, and argue back to a dissolution of the very elements of government. The sole question was, whether, when a measure, though not good in itself, was productive of good by preventing evil, it should or should not be adopted? No restraint was good in the abstract; yet it sometimes happened (and it was a part of the allotment of humanity) that men were obliged to recur to a lesser evil for prevention of a greater: it was in fact impossible

possible for a free constitution to escape unhurt from an attack made upon it under colour of its own principles; it must necessarily either fall under the attack, or be injured by that which was applied as its safeguard. Restrictions on monarchical governments were not very sensibly felt; but when any part of a community employed for its destruction a portion of rights and power enjoyed by all, there was great danger; and they would only have to chuse between two difficulties, namely, whether they would endure the utmost evil that unresisted, unrestrained power might bring, or lay restrictions on the whole, in order to prevent its ruin by the abuse of a part.

It was one of the conditions of his state here, that man hardly ever had in his power to make choice between goods; very seldom indeed to chuse between good and evil; but when put into the trying situation of chusing between two evils, it was then his reason and his fortitude were called forth into exertion, and his choice either depressed or elevated him above the ordinary level of his nature. In the present case, the necessity of chusing was rendered more unpleasant when, by resorting to the remedy which wisdom pointed out, they incurred the danger of offending those who were so very warmly attached to the constitution, as to view every thing that approached it with jealousy, and who, in the fervour of their attachment to that object, would incur the danger of ruin to the whole of it, rather than suffer a temporary encroachment upon a part; still more unpleasant was it rendered, if, as had been observed, pains were taken to misrepresent the intention of those who attempted it. Yet, under those difficulties, would it be right to abstain wholly from the attempt? Should they be deterred, under such circumstances, from the adoption of that which they thought right?

Into this dilemma, which he confessed was an arduous one, the House were led by the principles of certain societies; principles the growth of France, transplanted into British soil, but which, he was sure, never would find their way into that House. Those principles, so far from being congenial, were hostile to the constitution, and ridiculed it as a system of slavery; held that our government was an usurpation of the rights of the people, the administration of it altogether corrupt; and that, if even the legislature should agree to the favourite project of reform, it was an act of usurpation in them to attempt it. Under the influence of those French principles, the British societies, and their numerous adherents, entertained a gloomy and fanatical aversion to every thing English, threw contempt upon our fleets and armies, despised and maligned the courage
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of Englishmen, and even affected to doubt it. While every thing that bore a resemblance to English became an object of their aversion, even the American constitution, democratic though in fact it was, was reprobated, because it bore some resemblance to that of Great Britain, and had paid too much regard to property, and too much respect to religion. Nay, the present constitution of France itself, inasmuch as it was supposed to bear some faint resemblance to the British, fell into utter disgrace with them on that account. Thus the societies felt, and thus they expressed, themselves while they were let alone; but no sooner did they find parliament were preparing to repress their presumption and mischievous projects by a coercive law, than they turned their round, changed their tone, and flew into the arms of that constitution which but the day preceding they despised, vilified, and denied the existence of; attributing to its perfections more than ever had been to be found in any human institution, and extolling its principles of liberty to that romantic and extravagant excess, that it contained within itself that freedom which was to be its own destruction. To that situation Mr. Grant said the arguments on the other side were reducible, that if they were founded in reason, nothing was to be done which could be attended with the slightest temporary inconvenience. Perhaps, the Gentlemen had some secret to impart, some new mode of legislating, by which every good might be attained without its concomitant evil, every advantage gained without some sacrifice; the constitution be preserved from utter ruin, without weakening it in any of its parts; and, in the present case, be left as perfect as it was before, after a law suitable to the demands and necessity of the time should be passed. If the Gentlemen were possessed of such a secret, it was unknown to him; and the disclosure of such a novelty in legislation could not fail of being satisfactory to the House.

In many great states it had been found necessary to recur to the most unlimited agency, and to yield to a temporary suspension of all the powers and privileges of the people, for great and important purposes. To this extent, however, he hoped, and was sure, England would never have occasion to recur. It was, however, a principle which had never been disputed, that it was fit to surrender a small portion of freedom for a time, in order to save the remainder of the whole. For his part, he would again repeat, that he did not hold out this as a speculative improvement; on the contrary, he was convinced it was, to a certain degree, an evil in itself, and an abridgement on the constitution. Theorists in France had first maintained and acted on the proposition, that

that all power lay in the people, and that the people could not divest themselves of it; but they had at length arrived at such a period of political improvement, as to hold, that when once the people had delegated their authority, no part of it remained behind with them; that to assemble for the redress of grievances, was an unlawful re-assumption of their power; and that only an individual had a right to petition. Having never followed their theory in the first proposition, he would not in the second; a legislature might according to his judgment deviate from its original purposes, while meetings of the people had this salutary effect, that whatever inequality there might be in their elective rights, it was amply counter-balanced by their right to meet and to petition.

There was no country in the world he was convinced, in which the direct sense of the people had greater effect or weight than in Great Britain. He would, therefore, never think of proposing to infringe upon that power, even an atom's length, for any purpose less than the preservation of the bulk of that power. Gentlemen, indeed, had said, that we were not reduced to the hopeless necessity of resorting to any such remedy; it was however found that the Corresponding Society affiliating with France, was disseminating seditious principles, and carrying them as far as they could in effect; was it not then their duty to prevent them? would gentlemen say, that rather than resort to a mode of prevention, trenching in a small degree on the rights of the people, they would leave these societies at liberty to work the ruin of the constitution?

Some Gentlemen had said, that there were already laws existing to punish sedition; he was aware there were laws to punish it in solitary individuals; but were there laws stated to the present occasion, when sedition was carried on by thousands upon system? he fancied the laws were inadequate to meet them all by single indictments. If, in conformity with the advice of one Gentleman on the other side, prosecutions were set on foot, an honourable friend of his would say, "No: multiplied punishments produce multiplied evil."

How then were they to act? If the existing laws were to be thrown on the shelf, what then? Why, "*conciliate*," says another gentleman, (Mr. Lambton,) and thus they were to be made the sport of various and contradictory opinions. For his part, he hoped he did not arrogate too much to himself, when he said that no man more admired lenity, or more steadily believed in the happy effects of it, than himself: but lenity must depend on circumstances; and though there were very few, there certainly were some cases where it could not possibly pro-

duce any good effect; for the House must keep in mind that, in conciliatory measures, there must always be something to concede. In the contest with America, had lenient measures been adopted in time, it would probably have been attended with the most beneficial and happy consequences to the two countries; and it was under that impression, that many persons to whom the country looked up to with the greatest veneration earnestly recommended it. In the difference which we had with Ireland, lenity and forbearance became advisable; as the concession of a free trade, whatever might be the right, was wisely acceded to, in order to preserve the affections of that nation. What however did these societies require? Nothing less than the surrender of our religion, our property, and the whole of our constitution. That they demanded the destruction of the constitution was obvious; he did not misrepresent the fact, when he said so. None who professed the principles of Mr. Paine, and held them out for approbation and practice, could think they had any duty relative to the constitution but to destroy it, as an usurpation, and a system not only inexpedient, but unlawful.

When first French politics were imported into England, the opinion was, that the rights of man were paramount to, and must take place of all other principles; and that the will of the majority was to decide against the dictates of judgment and understanding; that is to say that however ignorant, unlettered, and void of intellect, the majority might be, an inferior number, composed of men of wildom, learning, and experience, must yield to them: this was the favourite doctrine; it was rebellion to argue against it, because it was the *will of the people*. They soon found, however, that the will of the people was in favour of the constitution. They directly altered their system, chose to forget their principle of the right of majority, and it no longer remained a question of *will*, but of *right*; that is to say, certain innate, natural rights, belonging to, inherent, and inseparable from man; namely, universal suffrage and annual parliaments: and if there were only one hundred persons in favour of it, and the rest of the nation against it, it was tyranny in the majority to controvert the right. What conclusion then, he asked, could take place, when there was nothing to concede but their whole demand, the annihilation of the constitution? "Let the honourable gentleman (said Mr. Grant) who has just sat down, and who proposed conciliatory measures (Mr. Lambton) open the negociation; and let him see whether he can compromise for less than universal suffrage and annual parliaments."

parliaments." Was the house quite prepared for the purposes of conciliation, to disregard the will of the people, and impose on all the rest that mode of Government, in order to satisfy the few who demanded it? Supposing this effected, had the honourable gentlemen no other difficulties to encounter? They might say that they were willing to let the monarchy alone; but it was not matter of choice with them; for their great oracle, Paine, had laid it down, that hereditary monarchy was not lawful; so that if the suffrage of the whole body of the people was for monarchy, there was no security against the attack of any ten men. Nay, Paine had asserted, that, in that point, they had not only no right to bind posterity, but had no right to bind themselves; for so great was the absurdity of monarchy, that even the sovereignty of the people was not competent to effect or give it force.

The only way, then, to conciliate, was to leave them to destroy the constitution. Could any man point out specific terms of concession in such a case? Did the States of Germany conciliate with the Anabaptists, who claimed universal dominion on the rights of saints, as this body claimed the government of the country on the principles of the rights of man? No. When the descendants of the Saints had recourse to arms, they were subdued by the Princes, and had since become as peaceable and submissive subjects, as if they had never dreamed of such absurd and extravagant demands. Gentlemen had said, this was not a case of so much urgency as to stop the freedom of action; they could nevertheless not fail to see their danger. That danger had been characterised in the resolutions of both houses: the evidence, which grounded them, shewed that the conduct of those societies tended to the dissolution of society; and the house had their own (the societies) authority that they were pursuing dangerous plans, not only with industry, but with success. He would not enter into a nice investigation of the facts, but say, that circumstances of notoriety concurred to point out the danger.—Upon the same foundation the Committee adopted, he went. If the surrender to be made was equal to the value gained, the situation was truly deplorable: gentlemen would see then the advantages of interference, before the ripened mischief made the point to be gained more precarious, and the sacrifice greater; they who would wait to let it ripen, would, if in France in 1792, say thus, "do not interrupt the Jacobins; let them go on till they do some mischief, and then punish them." And the morning of the

1st of August would be the first effort to rebut their wicked machinations.

He would not, he said, so far impose upon the people, as to say that this measure took nothing from them. He would, on the contrary, say, that it took that which he would not take, if he could avoid it; but it by no means merited the terms used by gentlemen on the other side, that it was a surrender of the constitution, and left nothing worth enjoyment; that was a gross mistake. The right to petition was not a part of the constitution; it was nothing in itself, but only a means to obtain an end; an instrument to operate on the legislature. It was surely better to give it up alone, than to give up both it and the constitution together; if the constitution went, it would be folly to suppose the right to petition would remain. Were all the benefits of the constitution lapped up in this one right? No! Estimate it as highly as gentlemen could, it was nothing when put in competition with liberty and constitutional happiness. Let the loss of the constitution and its guard be compared with the loss of the guard alone, and then let them determine on their choice. If he over-rated the danger, gentlemen who thought so should state their estimate of it: that, however, they studiously avoided; and whenever the subject naturally led to that point, they flew off from it to incidental topics. Not one gentleman on the other side had given his opinion on the quantum of the danger. Could the existence of large bodies of men, uniting in a conspiracy, and drawing in all the incidental bad humours of the state to bear against the constitution, be denied? Could they be laudable, good, or free from dangers? Would a revolution be a benefit? If those societies were pursuing laudable ends, why were they not encouraged? If the contrary, why should they not be resisted? What undefined, strange principle of action must that be, which neither merited applause, nor called for resistance? He hoped gentlemen would candidly say, under which of those classes they should be ranked. Gentlemen had said that the presumptions of guilty intentions in those societies had undergone a judicial discussion, and held out a verdict as a proof that no danger existed: for his part, he had always studiously avoided that subject, and would not discuss whether verdicts had the operation of merely exempting from punishment, or restoring to innocence; but surely no one would contend, that, because twelve men gave an opinion, the cause should abandon all legislative judgment? Would it not be monstrous, if, when the state of the people called aloud

for their protection against those numerous societies, they should answer, "We must do something, because twelve men have declared three of the society not guilty, and therefore there can be no danger to submit to ruin! We cannot save you? To this height, extravagant as it was, he maintained, the arguments of gentlemen on the other side carried it.

The next mode of getting rid of the subject adopted by gentlemen was saying, "discontent and disaffection are the natural consequences of the measures of Administration, the war, &c." On that he would say a word, and answer the argument by a simple question, "Did the proceedings of those societies, or did they not, begin before the war? Did they not begin when there was no other ground of complaint or grievance but the constitution itself? Yet this was compared to the time of Charles I. who, by making innovations, was destroying the constitution, and would have left no liberty; and thereby raised disturbances, which he endeavoured to prevent by harsh punishments. It was not for protecting, but for invading the constitution, that he incurred national resentment: but it was the refusal of the Parliament to innovate and destroy the constitution, which afforded matter of complaint and grievance to those societies. And while gentlemen insist that the chief criminality of ministers, which fomented those disturbances, was, that they had thrown the nation into war when in a state of unexampled prosperity, they forget that it was in the midst of that prosperity that those societies began their attacks on government.

It had been said, that ministers had acted inconsistently in alarming the House about danger, after having stated, in the Speech from the Throne, that the people were quiet. Before he spoke to this, he must observe, that there was a fashion grown up of late, that made it impossible to state a sober proposition, without fencing and guarding it round with all its meanings and definitions. Ministers had stated that the people were loyal, but that did not argue that there might not be one or more discontented. If a man stated that there was a considerable degree of disaffection in those factious societies, then the construction of government was, that the whole body of the people was disaffected, the whole nation libelled, and all were to be deprived of their freedom. Each of those, however, were nevertheless true in a reasonable extent. It was certainly true that the great body of the people were well affected to the constitution; did it however follow, that, because the number of the disaffected was small, the majority should not take measures to prevent the mischievous effects of their

their disaffection? That was the very condition in which strong measures should be taken: this was a point insisted upon on a similar occasion by the first philosopher and statesman of Rome, who said that a body of conspirators, of very small number, when compared with the bulk of the people, might shake the empire to its foundations. France, also, afforded an useful lesson, how small a portion of men had there produced the most ruinous effects. Paine himself stated, that the first persons who set on foot the revolution, were no more than seven, so despicable in talents, character and power, as not to be thought worth resistance.

If those societies proceeded on the model of their predecessors, the Jacobins of Paris, and followed up their plans, they would eradicate all regard for the constitution, and destroy respect for every species of authority; not merely the authority of place and office, but the authority annexed to talents, which are as much the strength of the state, as any who authority derived from artificial institutions. It would, indeed, be lamentable, if such made a party against itself; as it would be ridiculous to think, that if they could get the disaffected to go certain lengths, they might then throw them off. Such men should recollect, for their own instruction and guidance, that if all that was wise, great, and virtuous in human nature, rose up on one side, and the wretched libeller Marat, on the other, said to the people, "Be on your guard against the aristocracy of talents and wealth; you cannot suspect me, who have neither talents nor views of aristocracy;—all would sink before him. To that state, he said, it was possible we might be brought. A right honourable gentleman, of the most splendid talents, had, to be sure, said, that English minds were so constituted as to resist such examples; he believed he was, to a certain extent, right: but though they might be able, for some time, they could not be expected to resist a constant address to the passions, when assailed in the most flattering way; not in the way of obedience to power, but of rights and resistance to usurpation.

The very evils incident to life were attributed to government. Human nature itself might be brought into contempt, if its foul side was always produced, and its fair side put in the shade; and for those innovators he would say, that Swift's description of the Yahoos was as fair a representation of human nature, as the Corresponding Society's description was of the constitution. Keep out of sight all that is beautiful and excellent, and the best work of creation might appear foul and detestable. If those Societies and Lectures were permitted to proceed

proceed farther, he would venture to predict, that the natural disposition of the English mind would undergo a complete and fatal change. The fascination of the kind he complained of however slow, was inevitable in its effects. It had, indeed, been alledged, that there was a great disparity between the French and English characters, and from this the conclusion was drawn, that however similar the causes, the effects could not possibly be the same. He was ready, as well as happy, to admit the disparity of their characters; but he was far from being sure that the worst effects might not be produced by men of great rank and character, attempting to pursue public objects successfully by the assistance of the multitude. The multitude, he believed, were seldom harangued with so much success as when the speakers addressed themselves to their ruling passions, when they attributed their inferior stations in life to the grindings of oppression, ascribed every incidental evil to which human nature is exposed to the errors, and wickedness of the government, and, without ever adverting to their duties, enflamed them with extravagant notions of their rights.

France, he said, like the societies in question, at one time entertained so high a notion of metaphysical theories in government, that she erected an edifice of her own, in contempt of those massy fabrics, projected and matured by the experimental wisdom of ages. So greatly had this ephemeral production been admired and applauded in this country, that, three years since, he should have been censured by some gentlemen, and thought two sanguine if he had ventured to predict that it would not outlive the old and venerable fabric of the British constitution. They even then theorized upon theories, and tried the wonderful exercise of the Rights of Man, building their constitution upon the sovereignty of the people, and the will of the majority. They supposed, that if the mass of a nation was assembled, and the people of wisdom, experience, sense, and erudition, ranged upon one side, with the foolish, the giddy, and the idle, opposed to them on the other, if the latter was more numerous, their will should be obeyed. As it might well have been foreseen, this experiment had only proved the futility of such theories; and yet gentlemen would still persist in encouraging such absurd as well as mischievous opinions.

Mr. Grant, in glowing colours, described the miseries which those symptoms had produced, in France; the oppression of the people; the dethronement, imprisonment, and subsequent murder of the monarch; the expulsion of the clergy, and the
extinction

extinction of religion, which he wished the gentlemen on the other side to weigh well in their minds: considering the Bill as a measure of protection, and not of prohibition, at least in the strictest and worst meaning of that word, he said he should vote against the motion. He apologized to the House for having been led into much greater length than he originally intended, by the various ideas that had suggested themselves as the different topics came under his review, and reminded the House, that, although he thought it right to support the Bills, he admitted them to be an infringement; though he was convinced that they would operate not, as was said, as a ruinous restriction upon the constitution, but as a salutary protection of that glorious fabric.

Mr. Grant's speech was listened to with profound attention, and was admitted by the House in general to have been the ablest and most ingenious argument that had been urged in support of the Bill.

Mr. Fox said, he had listened with sincere pleasure, in common with every man in the House, to the able and eloquent speech delivered by the learned gentleman who had just sat down. He respected the talents of that learned gentleman, and admired his ingenuity. Nor did he mean any thing in the least disrespectful to the masterly display of both, which he had made on the present occasion, when he said, that though his speech was full of argument, and replete with eloquence, a man might safely subscribe to every statement he had brought forward, and every conclusion he had drawn, and yet vote against the present Bill.

The ingenuity of the honourable gentlemen had, indeed, made no inconsiderable impression upon the House; though his arguments seemed not so much to bear on the principle of the Bill under immediate discussion, as on the general policy of legislation. He felt the difficulty therefore in replying to a speech of that nature. Able and extensive as it had been, he was not in the least disposed, nor did he believe any sober politician would be inclined to controvert the principles laid down by the honourable gentleman in the beginning of his speech. His position was, that, at a time of considerable danger, it was proper to give up part of the constitution, in order to secure the remainder. That maxim abstractedly considered, was incontrovertible; before it could have any weight however, when applied in a practical view, it was necessary to prove the existence of the danger, its extent and magnitude; it would also be necessary to shew, that the remedy called for was exactly a surrender of that portion of the constitution which it might be proper to sacrifice, and not more than the value
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of the object to be secured. The degree of constraint which government was to impose, could be the only ground of doubt and difference of opinion. That government was in its application a system of restraint upon human action, was clear and undeniable. It was important, however, to consider well the quantity and the quality of the restraint which circumstances might require:

The honourable gentleman had complained, that it was the temper of the times to take every general principle as meant to apply universally, and to fasten upon the person who employed it all the absurd consequences which might arise from such an application. He admitted the truth of the observation, and was convinced that no man had better reason to complain than himself. The honourable gentleman had accused gentlemen on that side of the House of wishing to produce this dilemma, either that the people were animated by an universal spirit of loyalty, or that they were inflamed with a spirit of disaffection. He had never said that the people were completely harmonious in their political sentiments or opinions, or that no discontent prevailed. It had, however, been often stated on his side of the House, and he would call upon the honourable gentleman to say, whether he believed the spirit of dissatisfaction was greater or less at present than it had been previous to the war? He had never stated, because he had never believed, that the state of public affairs was wholly without danger. If it was allowed to be greater, to what cause was the increase to be attributed? He was surely entitled to presume that it was occasioned by the discontents excited by an impolitic and unjust war; by the measures of a corrupt, incapable administration; and that it was ascribable to the complicated miseries arising from the decay of commerce, and the pressure of famine, into which the country had been plunged. The war then had produced an effect directly the reverse of that stated by ministers themselves as the chief reason for triumphing in its success. If on the other hand, the ground of apprehension was less, why were the sacrifices required for public security to be increased? He asked pardon of the House for the repetition in which he indulged; but when the same arguments came from the opposite bench, and the same objections were offered to gentlemen on his side of the House, he could not forbear repeating that material question.

With regard to the point of danger, of which the Honourable Gentleman was so anxious to have a specific declaration of his sentiments, he had always stated, that some discontent ex-

isted; which might not be unworthy of attention, but which would never justify the legislative remedies proposed. The Honourable Gentleman had affected to treat as a paradox the observation of his honourable friend, (Mr. Lambton,) that the danger of an attack was often created by the injudicious mode of defence. If it was a paradox however, it was one of those which frequent experience proved to be true. Who could deny that many political evils were rendered desperate by the absurd methods pursued to remedy or to remove them. Was the honourable gentleman so much more of a whig than himself, as to impute the whole evils of the civil wars, and the resistance to Charles I. to which the nation owed its liberties, to the conduct of that ill-fated monarch? Did the honourable gentleman believe all these calamities were to be ascribed to the illegality of ship-money, or of various other acts of that prince? Had there not been at that time a body of persons, previously inimical to the constitution; and was not the attack upon the monarchy rendered formidable, and even tragical in the event, by the rigorous measures which rendered the breach irreparable? The honourable gentleman had also mentioned the case of the Americans. When that unfortunate dispute was first agitated, and when he heard scraps of pamphlets, and papers, read, to prove that there was a settled design formed, to shake off the connection with this country, he had never been so unqualified a supporter of America, as to assert that no such designs were entertained. He was convinced, however, that those who had conceived the project of separating from the mother country were few indeed. By injurious attempts to remedy the evils then complained of, the catastrophe which it was intended to prevent was realised.

That honourable gentleman had recurred to the fallacy so often answered, of which gentlemen on his side were accused, that they ascribed the discontents to the measures of his majesty's ministers. The honourable gentleman asked, did not these discontents exist before the war, to which much of the discontent was imputed, had been commenced? Here again he would recall the two examples he had already employed. In the times of Charles the First there might have existed causes of dissatisfaction, which, nevertheless, the extravagant pretences of that prince, and the impolicy of his ministers, in enlarging them, carried to that height which proved so fatal to themselves. At one period a compromise with America was practicable, but the opportunity of conciliation was lost, and the desperate system pursued in this country forever cut off all hopes of that compromise being effected.

It had been said, that much danger was to be apprehended from that party hostile to the constitution drawing to itself all the discontented persons of the country. If the strength of this party depended upon the discontent which a bad government produced, and as the worst administration necessarily would occasion the most discontent, he would defy any man to deny that a great part of the ill humour arose from the bad conduct of ministers. If the discontented were composed of two kinds, those who were enemies to the constitution, and those who, from a spirit of discontent, joined their party and increased its number, correct the abuses which had been so much the subject of complaint, introduce moderation and economy in the public expenditure, and banish that corruption which had crept into the representative body. Such a proceeding would separate those from the disaffected who were displeased with abuses, and at the same time reconcile those to the constitution who had been alienated by its defects.

The nonourable gentleman, in animadverting on what had been said to come from gentlemen on his side, had only engendered a monstrous doctrine to show his dexterity in demolishing it. It had never been said much less contended that the verdict of juries on the state trials had proved that no seditious practices existed, but merely that the traitorous conspiracy was proved to be ill-founded. He had no hesitation to declare that he considered the verdict of the jury on that point to be of more weight than the report of the secret committee. The honourable gentleman had attempted to point out an inconsistency between the language at present held, and that which they had heard upon the report of the secret committee. The honourable gentleman likewise had confounded a variety of circumstances, and, from the result of his own combinations, endeavoured to fix on his side of the House that inconsistency which he had first invented, and then urged as a charge of inconsistency.

With regard to the degree of danger the honourable gentleman imputed to the corresponding and other societies, principles which he charged upon no authority, it was impossible to believe that, among the whole, there was a majority unfavourable to monarchy. They might, indeed, have professed to maintain the doctrine of annual parliaments, and universal suffrage. These principles, however, were not borrowed from the French; they had been inculcated in discourses and writings, by respectable characters in Great Britain many years since; and if they contained the evil imputed to them, the French might complain, with more justice, that they had been

imported into France from this country. Those societies, the honourable gentleman had observed, must have some determinate object; either they were deserving of encouragement, or of disapprobation. Could there, he exclaimed be no division of men, or opinions, which they might overlook, without being censured for their approbation, or accused for their neglect? Must the intolerance of French politics be adopted, which permits no minority, but which proceeds to violence, bloodshed, and extermination? There were many opinions which it was indifferent to approve, or to condemn; and the dilemma which the honourable gentleman employed was the most absurd and ridiculous that had ever been framed: was a man bound to attack every opinion different from his own? He had never been an advocate for annual parliaments yet that opinion had been avowed and maintained at various periods within this century. By the Tories it was held as a favourite doctrine; and it had been said that the restoration of that system was a part of the plan of politics taken up in the beginning of the present reign, though that condition had never been observed. Instead, then, of attempting to legislate on this subject, it would be most proper to allow the public to judge for themselves, and trust to the good sense of the English nation. He had stated all his opinions. He had never evaded an explicit declaration. It was now to be considered how far the Bill was applicable to the object it professed to have in view. If Englishmen had been seduced from their attachment to the constitution, how could it be restored by the present Bills? Meetings might, indeed, be put a stop to, but a total communication of sentiment could not be prevented. The intercourse of the mind would remain. If there were, as represented by the honourable gentleman, something so fascinating in the opinions it was to proscrib, the prospect was indeed alarming. Good God Sir! said Mr. Fox, in such a case, what must be the horrors of our situation, when, in addition to its other evils, this detestable Bill strong as the measure is is found to be inadequate to its purpose?

The honourable gentleman had, he observed, treated with a degree of contempt an opinion of his honourable friend, (Mr. Sheridan,) that the difference of habits, government, and character, would prevent the people of this country from ever sinking into the horrors to which the French unprepared for freedom, had been exposed. Did the right honourable gentleman think that the negroes of the plantations, or the subjects of Russia, Turkey, or Germany, were capable of that liberty with which an Englishman might be indulged? It was not
fair

fair, therefore, to reason from Frenchmen to Englishmen, or to argue that in such dissimilar circumstances the same events would take place. Was the honourable gentleman correct in his information concerning the French revolution? The effects of the jacobin club produced, perhaps, terrible effects upon minds not prepared for so great a change. Yet many of those events, to which their future disasters were owing, such as the depriving the clergy of their lands, and the nobility of their titles, took place previous to the establishment, at least to the credit and authority of the jacobin club.

The learned gentleman had stated, that the whole of the confusion which had desolated France had arisen from the jacobin clubs; that the number of them were few, and that the original republican club in Paris consisted only of seven members, and that they afterwards produced the revolution of the 10th of August, 1792. Would that learned gentleman seriously say he believed it rational to frame a legislative provision which was to affect a whole nation, with respect to the most important part of its rights, on the ground of the determination of seven persons? The revolution in France was not to be accounted for in that manner, nor was that the period at which they were to date its commencement. When, then, was the period? What was the cause of the revolution of the 10th of August, 1792? Be it remembered that he was no advocate for the conduct of the jacobins; no liberal man would accuse him of it; though he knew he must put up with that ill founded charge from others. Let them inquire into the cause of the success of the jacobins in France; such an enquiry was necessary in order to be able to follow the arguments of the learned gentleman upon that subject. He would say then, that they were concluding irrationally indeed, if they said it was owing entirely to the doctrine of the jacobins that the horrors of that day were exhibited, or that they were the cause of the dreadful catastrophe of the late unfortunate monarch of that country; a prince whose cruel fate might induce them to overlook the errors of his reign. In fact his fate was in a great degree owing to his avowed connection with the nobility of that country; a nobility whose views were hostile to the interests of the people. He believed the king and his ministers were guilty of planning what was attempted at that time against the people. Supposing even that they were not, he would ask, was not the suspicion that they were guilty, a great cause of the revolution of the 10th of August, 1792? at that time the king's brother had left him; and the situation of his family, and their connection with the house of Austria, then known to be enemies to the

the government of France, were so well ascertained, that their objects could not be doubted. Did not these circumstances give ample room for suspicion, on the part of the French, as to the intentions of the king, and those ministers by whose council he was so fatally guided? If this were admitted, he had a right to say, that the catastrophe was no more accelerated by the wickedness of those who attacked, than by the baseness and folly of those who defended.

The learned gentleman had observed, that if he had said some years ago, that the then constitution of France would not last so long as our own, he should, by many, have been treated as a person who spoke in a very visionary and idle manner. In what company that gentleman had been, or from whose sentiments he formed that conjecture, Mr. Fox said, he did not know; if the learned gentleman had alluded to him, he had never said any thing like it. On the contrary, he had always entertained and professed a different doctrine; would any man assert, that although he had often said, that the first French revolution was a glorious event, he had asserted, that the systems which had been built upon that revolution were good? So far from it, the most moderate of them appeared to him to be unstable at least. That was his opinion; and the right hon. gentleman opposite to him knew it to be so; in one particular instance, he had emphatically so pronounced it. He meant to allude to a motion made for a Reform of Parliament. On that occasion, he had stated it as his opinion, and he had not changed it, that an old edifice, well altered and repaired, was more likely to be durable, than one built on an entirely new construction, of the structure of which they had no experience. That was his opinion then, and it was his opinion at the present; the learned gentleman's allusion to opinions, therefore, if directed to him, was unfairly directed, and the sarcasm ill applied.

The rest of the learned gentleman's speech was what was commonly called pathetic, and he thought it necessary to take some notice of parts of it. He had stated, that if there was a violent party in this country, who pretended to have in view the destruction of the power of ministers, and the correction of abuses, and they should once succeed, they would not stop there; that not only the minister would be the object of their fury, but they would aim at the destruction of others who had any authority in the country from their talents, independent of any connection with the government. If the learned gentleman did him the honour to include him under that class, he would tell him plainly, the caution to him was needless.

needful; by such an observation the learned gentleman only brought to his mind what, indeed, had been but seldom absent from it for many years. "If ever," said he, "those persons who wish to destroy the constitution of this country, as was done in the French revolution, by rapine and plunder, by carnage and desolation, should become a triumphant party here, tho' I may not be the first, I am well convinced I shall not be the last object of popular fury." If ever the day should come, which God avert, when mens' lives should be subject to that sort of popular fury, Mr. Fox said, he thought there were others who would go before him, and those were the authors of the present measures; and from that time, in his conscience, he believed, his life would be short indeed; and therefore the learned gentleman need not warn him upon that subject. He saw that danger clearly; but he was not one of those who looked at the danger on one side only. The learned gentleman had said, if he joined bad men, he could not shake off his companions, nor check their excess; a truth which history confirmed. Was it not true on the other side also? If it be true, that if he acted with men of bad principles, the effect of such a junction might be, that those who had served them in a particular cause might have no power to resist their fury. Was it not, however, undeniably true, that those who join a particular minister, and assist him in his attempts to destroy the constitution of the country, would feel the same inability to check the progress of his ambition? Was it not as clearly true, if he had lent his assistance to bring about that euthanasia of the constitution, that he must afterwards yield his life to that cursed power who had affected the destruction of their country? He believed the time was not very distant, when those who had lent the minister, he would call, very honourable assistance, would not deny that they were become his personal slaves. He believed that some of them had felt it, and he thought he had seen some symptoms of that fact already. Certain gentlemen smiled at this; he did not mean to say any thing that could be deemed a personal degradation to them, if they did not feel it for themselves. But when he saw, day after day, and year after year, a system pursued, which tended to bring this country to that euthanasia predicted by Hume, he could not say he was willing to be an assistant in its accomplishment. With regard to the mischief, which was dreaded by the junction of men, who only wanted to reform abuses, with those who wished the destruction, he would apply the remedy proposed by Mr. Burke, in the case of our dispute with America: that masterly politician

tician had said on that occasion, that he would wish to separate the Americans. Not by separating the north from the south, not by separating the east and west, not by separating Boston from Philadelphia, but by separating those who were merely discontent with the abuses of the constitution, and those who had a hatred for it, and wished its total destruction. The learned gentleman had asked, in what manner they should enter into a negotiation with these discontented persons? He believed there would be some difficulty in knowing with whom to treat. As to the question, how we should treat? his answer was, by conciliation. This would be done, as Mr. Burke had said, by separating them. How were they to be separated? By setting about to correct abuses in earnest, as much as possible, whether in that house, or in any other part of the government. This would remove all ground of jealousy and discontent on the part of those who loved the constitution, and who wished only to see the abuses eradicated; and this would destroy the alliance between them and those who really harboured a hatred for the constitution itself. This was the sort of separation which Mr. Burke recommended with regard to the Americans; and this was the separation which he would recommend, of the discontented in the country, at this time. Strike out the bad part of our present system, add to the beautiful parts, if that be possible; but, at all events, strike out the bad ones; and then, although they should not reconcile to their system, those who hated the constitution itself, they would deprive them of their force, by taking away the arguments by which they prevailed on good men to join them, and by which alone they could ever become formidable; namely, that of stating the abuses of our constitution as they subsisted in practice at present. What were the arguments that these men made use of to gain to their party those who loved the constitution, and which had been said by the learned gentleman to be so seducing? Topics of abuses in the constitution! Reform these abuses, and they took those seducing arguments away. It was, indeed, the whole of their argument; for as to their theory of government, that he was sure would not make any deep impression on the body of the people, who had too much good sense to be misled by such egregious fallacies.

The learned gentleman, in one part of his speech, and only in one, seemed to have a reference to the Bill before the house. The learned gentleman admitted that the house was going to make a sacrifice by the measure before them;

them ; but had contended that what was retained of the rights of the people was still of higher value ; the history of governments was certainly better than theory ; in this, therefore, he agreed with the learned gentleman. He did not, however agree with him, that what they were to retain was superior to what they had to lose, if the Bill were passed into a law. That which was to be taken away was the foundation of the building. It might, indeed, be said, that there were beautiful parts of the building still left. The same might be said of another building that was undermined : here is a beautiful hall, there is a beautiful saloon ; there is a fine drawing-room, here are elegant paintings ; there elegant and superb furniture, here an extensive and well-chosen library. If the foundation were undermined, there could be nothing to rest upon, and the whole edifice must soon fall to the ground. Such would be the case with our constitution, if the Bill should pass into a law. Our government was valuable, because it was free. What, he begged gentlemen to ask themselves, were the fundamental parts of a free government ? He knew there was a difference of opinion upon that subject. His own opinion was, that freedom did not depend upon the executive government, nor upon the administration of justice, nor upon any one particular or distinct part, nor even upon forms, so much as it did on the *general freedom of speech and writing*. With regard to freedom of speech, the Bill before the house was a direct attack upon that freedom. No man dreaded the use of an universal proposition more than he did himself, he must nevertheless say, that speech ought to be completely free, without any restraint whatever, in any government pretending to be free. By being completely free, he did not mean that a person should not be liable to punishment for abusing that freedom, but he meant freedom in the first instance. The press was so at present, and he rejoiced it was so ; what he meant was, any man might write and print what he pleased, although he was liable to be punished, if he abused that freedom ; this he called perfect freedom in the first instance. If this were necessary with regard to the press, it was still more so with regard to speech. An *imprimatur* had been talked of, and it would be dreadful enough ; but a *dicatur* would be still more horrible. No man had been daring enough to say, that the press should not be free : but the Bill before them did not, indeed, punish a man for speaking, it prevented him from speaking. For his own part he had never heard of any danger arising to a free state from the freedom of the press, or freedom of speech ; so far from this, he was perfectly

learn that a free state could not exist without both. The learned gentleman had said, would they not preserve the remainder by giving up this liberty? He admitted, that, by passing of the Bill, the people would have lost a great deal. "A great deal," said Mr. Fox, "Aye, all that is worth preserving. For you will have lost the spirit, the fire, the freedom, the boldness, the energy of the British character, and with them its best virtue. I say, it is not the written law of the constitution of England, it is not the law that is to be found in books, that has constituted the true principle of freedom in any country, at any time. No! it is the energy, the boldness of a man's mind, which prompts him to speak, not in private, but in large and popular assemblies, that constitutes, that creates, in a state, the spirit of freedom. This is the principle which gives life to liberty; without it the human character is a stranger to freedom.

"I have heard it said of the right honourable gentleman opposite to me, that he is now endeavouring to kick down the ladder by which he advanced to eminence. It is not him, it is England herself, that is now kicking down the ladder by which she has arisen to wealth. I am sorry I mentioned wealth first; by which, I say, she has arisen to wealth, to honour, to fame, to glory, and to happiness; and is now kicking down that ladder, the freedom of speech, by which she has arisen to that eminent and envied happiness, although now becoming the derision and contempt of the whole globe! It was by this ladder she became the envy of the rest of the world. —

— Sic fortis Etruria crevit.

Scilicet, et rerum facta est pulcherrima Roma.

How did we rise into our eminence? By the written law? No! By the boldness of the English character arising out of the freedom of speech. This is the principle which led you on to fame. If you abandon it, your fall, indeed, will not be in an instant, but it will not on that account be the less certain. The learned gentleman has appealed to Rome. It was the spirit, the energy, which I am describing, which elevated Rome to what she was, once the mistress of the world; it was on the loss of that spirit that she fell; and I have no doubt but that her liberties were declining in the reign of Augustus, as ours are now; that some man of genius would say, Behold these superb marbles, this elegant building, these beautiful forms of state. —

— Tum tatus hos prata perambulat.

This was flattery to Augustus; to that great destroyer of the liberties of mankind; as much an enemy to freedom, as any of the able tyrants who succeeded him. So with us, we are

to be flattered with an account of the form of our government, by king, lords, and commons—

Eadem Magistratum vocabula.

There were some then, as there are now, who said that the energy of Rome was not gone; they now say that we have king, lords, and commons; we have juries; and therefore we are still free; but I say, take away the freedom of speech, which is the principal, and your fall is certain, your death inevitable. As a tree, that is injured at the root, and the bark taken off, the branches may live for a while, some sort of blossom may still remain; but it will soon wither, decay, and perish: so, it is true, you may seem to have some parts that appear beautiful; but, take away the freedom of speech, or of writing, and the foundation of all your freedom is gone; you will then fall, and be degraded and despised by all the world for your weakness and your folly, for not taking care of that which conducted you to all your fame, your greatness, your glory, and your happiness. Before this happens, let the people once more be tried. I am a friend to taking the sense of the people, and therefore a friend to this motion. I wish for every delay that is possible in this important and alarming business. I wish for this adjournment—

Spatium requiemque furori.

Let us put a to stop the madness of this Bill; if you pass it, you will take away the foundation of the liberty of England, and then farewell to any happiness in this country."

Mr. Grant explained, and the question was instantly called for, on which the House divided.

<i>Ayes</i>	-	-	269
<i>Noes</i>	-	-	70

Majority - 199

The question was then put on the speaker's leaving the chair, and the House again divided,

<i>Ayes</i>	-	-	273
<i>Noes</i>	-	-	72

Majority 201

The House then resolved itself into a Committee on the said Bill for preventing seditious meetings; the chairman reported progress, and obtained leave to resume the discussion on Friday, 27th. Adjourned.

*List of the Members who voted for Mr. Curwen's Motion,
on Wednesday, November 25.*

Anson, Thomas, Esq.	Martin, James, Esq.
Arc, Antoine, William Esq.	Milbank, Ralph, Esq.
Aubrey, Sir John, Baronet	Milner, Sir William Mordaunt, Bart.
Bailey George, Esq.	North, Dudley, Esq.
Bouverie, Honourable Edward	Pease, Henry, Esq.
Burgh, Joseph Rindyll, Esq.	Phillips, John George, Esq.
Byng George, Esq.	Plumer, William, Esq.
Barker, John Cluich, Esq.	Polett, William Powlett, Esq.
Clayton, Sir Robert, Baronet	Rawdon, Honourable John
Coke, Edward, Esq.	Ridley, Sir Matthew White, Baronet
Coke, Thomas William, Esq.	Robinson Morrice, Esq.
Courtenay, John, Esq.	Russell, Right Honourable Lord John
Crewe, John, Esq.	Russell, Right Honourable Lord Wm.
Curwen, John Christian, Esq.	St. Andrew, St. John, Honourable
Dundas, Charles, Esq.	Scudamore, John, Esq.
Fetherstonhaugh, Sir Henry, P. M.	Shedden Richard Brinsley, Esq.
Fitzpatrick, Right Hon. Richard	Smith, General
Fletcher, Sir Henry, Baronet	Smith, William, Esq.
Foley, Honourable Edward	Steuart, Right Honourable Lord Rt.
Fox, Right Honourable Charles James	Stanley, John Thos. Esq.
Francis, Philip, Esq.	Sturt, Charles, Esq.
Gassington, Sir Thomas, Baronet	Stiles, Sir Francis, Baronet
Grey, Charles Esq.	Syke, Francis William, Esq.
Hare, James, Esq.	Tuleton, General
Harrison, John, Esq.	Taylor, Sergeant, Esq.
Howard, Henry, Esq.	Taylor, Michael Angelo, Esq.
Hussey, William, Esq.	Tenness, Sir Henry Vane Baronet
Jekyll, Joseph, Esq.	Townshend Rt. Honourable Lord J.
Jervoise, Jervoise Clarke, Esq.	Vyner, Robert Esq.
Kemp, Thomas, Esq.	Walsley, Charles Ellis, Esq.
Lambton, William Henry, Esq.	Wharton, John, Esq.
Lemon, Sir William, Baronet	Whitbread, Samuel, Jun. Esq.
Lewes, Sir Watkin Knight	Wilbraham, Roger Esq.
Lushington, William, Esq.	Wilmington, Sir Edward, Baronet
Macleod, General	Wendham, Honourable Percy Charles
Maitland, William, Esq.	Wynn, Robert Watkin, Esq.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX:

CONTAINING

TREATIES, STATE PAPERS, PARLIAMENTARY
REPORTS, AUTHENTIC DOCUMENTS, &c.

MINUTES of the Evidence of the Witnesses examined by the House of Lords, upon the 29th Day of October 1795; a Copy of which was communicated to the House of Commons, from their Lordships, on the 30th Day of October 1795.

Mr. JOHN WALFORD, of Pall Mall, Haberdasher, was called in; and being sworn, was examined as follows:

WAS you called out on this day by the high constable?
I was.

Upon what duty?

The office of constable, which I serve at present.

Where was you stationed; and what part of the attendance had you?

I was stationed by Mr. Jones, the high constable, at the Horse Guards.

Did you place yourself according to that direction?

Yes.

Did you attend his Majesty's coach from the Horse Guards to the House of Lords?

Yes; on the right hand side of his Majesty's carriage.

Give an account of what you observed in that attendance?

On entering into Parliament Street, I observed one man in particular among the crowd very active; which I observed to Mr. Stockdale, my brother constable, at the time. This man was running by the side of the house, calling out "No war! "Down with George!" And on our entrance into Palace Yard, I observed something came with great velocity from the foot pavement, as I thought; on which I observed to Mr. Stockdale, "Good God! the glass is broke! That must surely be a ball." His Majesty then passed on to the house, and I observed the man with the crowd perfectly quiet. Immediately

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on his Majesty's coming out of the house, they set up a hooting and hissing. I did not observe the man any more, particularly, till I got into the Park; I then perceived him frequently stoop down, but whether he picked up any thing or not I cannot say; but at that time there were many stones being thrown about. Hearing him make the same exclamation again, I told him, if not quiet, I most assuredly should take him into custody.

The exclamation of, "Down with George!" again?

Yes; his still repeating it, when I came opposite to Carleton Gardens, I made one or two attempts to seize him, by putting my hands between the horse guards. Finding I could not do it, without danger of being trod upon, I requested one of them would draw back; upon finding which I immediately seized him, and drew him in close to the carriage, and conveyed him to the Court Yard of St. James's, where I believe he now is.

On what part of the pavement was the coach, when the glass was broken?

Almost the center of the coach way, just going from crossing of Bridge Street; just opposite to a bow window house by the Ordnance Office, on this side of the Office.

Whether you are understood right, that you saw whatever struck the glass as it came through the air, before it touched the glass?

Yes.

You cannot say what it was?

It is utterly impossible, it came with such velocity.

Whether it struck upon the glass side of the carriage, or passed through the carriage first?

It struck the glass which was up; immediately after I saw his Majesty look down.

What size did you apprehend this mischievous weapon to be of?

I observed at the time it must be the size of a marble or bullet.

Do you judge from its size in the air, or from the hole it made in the glass?

It was impossible to judge of its size as it passed, but I judged from the hole it made in the glass.

Whether, at the time this weapon passed, you observed the man where you have before described?

I saw him immediately after; at the time my eyes were not on the pavement.

When you then saw him, was he upon the pavement?

Whether on the foot pavement or not, I cannot tell. The horse guards were between the mob and the constable.

Did you observe any thing in the hands of the man during any part of the time?

I did not.

Have

Have you any reason to know whether he had any thing in his hand or not; any recollection of it?

I did not see his hands at all.

Whereabouts was it that you saw him frequently stooping down?

In the Park, by Carleton Gardens.

When you said, "Good God! it must be a ball!" did you mean to say, that it must be discharged by an instrument?

The witness was directed to withdraw.

Then John Walford was again called in, and examined as follows:

When you said, "Good God! it must be a ball!" did you mean to say that it must be discharged by an instrument?

I made the observation, that nothing could throw it with that velocity, but an instrument.

Whether you observed any other outrage committed on the carriage in which his Majesty was?

Several.

State them to the house?

By repeatedly throwing stones.

Do you mean by the same man, or others?

I do not positively say that this man threw any;—by others many were thrown.

You have stated that you heard this man use the expression, "Down with George!" No war!"—Did you hear any other persons use expressions of treason or disrespect?

Several repeating the same.

Did they appear to be persons aiding or abetting this man, or accidental persons, differently dispersed in the crowd?

I cannot say whether they were immediately of his party; but there was one party, whom I observed the whole of the way, keeping by the side of the carriage, both to the House of Peers and back again—the same people.

Were they merely men; or men and women indiscriminately?

They were entirely consisting of men and boys.

Did you conceive any of them spoke with a French accent, so as that you might think they were Frenchmen?

No, I did not.

Are any of them in custody?

There are three, I believe.

Upon your seizing the man, did he make resistance, or shew any alarm; or what was his behaviour on the occasion?

He struggled very much to get away; on which I was obliged to have the assistance of one or two other constables to convey him.

Was he alarmed?

Very much.

Did he say any thing?—What was his behaviour after you seized him?

He

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He said, " Good God ! that I should ever be suspected of dis-loyalty !"

After he was seized, was he encouraged, or otherwise addressed by any of the other persons whom you remarked ?

It was impossible any of them could get to us for the horse ; but he kept repeating the whole way, " He thought there could be no harm in acquainting his Majesty with their grievances."

At the time you seized him, and he struggled, did any body attempt to rescue him ?

I conceive it was impossible they could attempt any thing of the kind, from the horse closing immediately upon us. We were surrounded directly by them.

Was it generally observed by the persons who surrounded the King's carriage, that this man was taken into custody ?

Do you mean the constables, or the mob.

The mob ?

I really cannot say.

Did you search the man you seized ?

We did.

Did you find any weapon about him ?

There was nothing at all found in his pockets of any kind.

Did the man appear to be in liquor ?

No.

Did the ball appear to come in an horizontal direction ?

I really cannot tell, it came with such velocity.

The witness was directed to withdraw.

Then Mr. JOHN STOCKDALE, Bookseller, of Piccadilly, was called in ; and being sworn, was examined as follows :

Are you serving the office of constable now ?

Yes.

Had you notice from the high constable to attend to-day ?

Yes.

Where was you placed ?

At the Horse Guards.

Was you all the time near the last witness, Walford ?

I was.

Give an account, then, what you observed from the Horse Guards ?

I observed a great crowd, and a number of persons, about forty or fifty, going near the King's coach, hissing and making a great deal of noise, and crying out, " No war ! No George !" and a number of expressions of that kind.

What other expressions ?

A number of others, which I did not take particular notice what they were. Mr. Walford mentioned to me, he observed some

some of the persons that were very active in hissing and making a riot. Nothing particular happened, till I observed, when we came to the narrow part of Palace Yard, when I saw something thrown at his Majesty's carriage, and heard it hit the glass. Mr. Walford, who was standing close by me (I was then within a few yards of the carriage) remarked to me, that he thought that was the person who flung it, and desired me to assist in seizing him, and pointed out the man. But as the crowd was very thick, I did not take any particular notice, as I thought it impossible to seize any man, the crowd was going so quick. Nothing further passed till his Majesty alighted, when Mr. Walford observed the man alluded to standing in company with some others near the carriage: he made this remark, that he believed that was the man that flung the stone, and that was so very active; and pointed him out, I believe, to one of the Bow Street persons: I don't know the person, but they said his name was Kennedy. After his Majesty was in the coach, and set off on his return home to the palace, we observed this same person, with a number of others, that had followed the coach at the same time downwards, keeping company on the side of the coach in a very disorderly manner, hissing and groaning, and calling out, "No war!" and making use of a number of disagreeable expressions.

What expressions?

Such as "No war!" and I believe "No King!" And this person, with several others that went down and came up, making frequent exertions to get through from amongst the horse to the King's carriage, which by main force we put back betwixt the horses. When we had got about the middle of the park, the constable who was with me (I believe his name is Walford) addressed himself particularly to the young man that was taken up, desiring him to be peaceable and behave better, or he would take him into custody. He, with others, appeared to be very insolent, to set the constable at defiance; upon which he was seized and kept in custody till we got to St. James's. Nothing else passed, that I know of.

Did you see any body in the act of throwing?

I did not,

Was you or Walford foremost when the glass broke?

We were nearly together; he was a yard or two before me.

Did Walford make any observation to you upon it.

He did.

What was it?

He said, "I am certain that was the man that flung the stone; let us seize him,"—alluding to the person that was afterwards taken up, a young man in a grey coat and a black collar.

Did you observe the stroke on the glass?

I did not, but I saw whatever it was that was thrown very distinctly, and heard it go against the glass. It seemed to me

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to have the appearance of an halfpenny ; and I saw it so distinct, that it appeared as if the force of the throw was spent before it hit the glass, and, by that means, that it could not break the glass, though I do not know that it did not.

Did you observe if the glass was broke ?

No, I did not,

Did Walford make any observation to you, with regard to the stroke upon the glass ?

I do not recollect—but I really believe that what I saw thrown was not what broke the glass, because other persons that were near me heard something that went past with great velocity against the glass, and that was not the case with what I saw thrown against the glass ; as I have said before, the force was spent.

Did Walford make any observations to you upon the velocity with which it was thrown ?

I am not certain whether he did or not ; but I think he did not think that what I saw thrown was what broke the glass.

Do you recollect that Walford at the time said any thing to you of what he thought broke the glass ?

I am not certain ; I think he thought it was something that was thrown with great velocity, but I am not certain.

Did he say what that something was ?

He did not, but I am as perfectly satisfied as I can be, that there were two substances thrown at the same time, for the reason I mentioned before.

You said, there were forty or fifty persons went back from here ;—do you mean to say they were the same parties ?

Yes ; and several of them seemed to know each other, as if they belonged to the same gang, if I may be allowed such an expression. My reason for it is, that there were several standing together. The young man taken up was resting his shoulder on one of his companions in a friendly manner.—I asked him, at St. James's, " if he knew the person whose shoulder he was resting on ? " And he denied having any knowledge of the persons he was standing with.

When Walford talked of a substance thrown, did you understand him to mean thrown with the hand ?

Yes ; but there were other persons present that differed from him in opinion, and thought it was a shot from a window where there were no persons looking out. I looked at the window myself. I gave credit for that opinion, because what I saw thrown, though I heard it hit the glass, could not break it, at least I thought it could not ; nor I could not believe the window was broke, till I enquired of the servants about the coach, and then that convinced me that it was something thrown from some window, a mangle, or something of that kind, with great velocity.

State the particular part of the street where you saw the substance like a halfpenny strike the window ?

It

It was betwixt the two palace yards, thrown from the right-hand side, in the narrow part.

You attended the carriage from the one Palace Yard to the other—did you hear any other substance strike the window between the one Palace Yard and the other?

I did not; and for that reason, that if there was any thing that went through the window, it must have been at the same time, for I did not hear any second stroke against the glass.

Do you recollect who the persons were that thought it must have come from a window?

I do not; but it was the conversation of the different constables that were about the carriage after his Majesty alighted, and the opinion of several: I do not recollect who asserted the fact of its being thrown from a window.

Have you since seen the hole in his Majesty's carriage?

I have seen one hole; that was after the carriage got into the palace, and that was made, I believe, by a tile or something of the kind, thrown at the carriage as it was entering the palace-gate in returning.

Did the brick hit his Majesty's carriage on the same side as the substance hit it in Palace Yard; was it on the right-hand side, or the left?

On the left, I believe.

Did you see the brick hit it?

No; I did not.

You saw no other hole in his Majesty's carriage?

No.

You think something was flung out of a window of a house;—do you know the house?

Certainly I could not; nor within fifty yards.

Do you know the Ordnance Office?

I do not.

You mentioned "Walford had taken notice of the activity of a man;" was that when the glass was broke, or before that time?

I believe he mentioned that circumstance to me before the stone was thrown; about half-way between the Horse Guards and Palace Yard.

Was the person whom Mr. Walford pointed out to you in Palace Yard, as the person who threw the stone, the person who afterwards taken up?

Yes.

And Mr. Walford said, "that was the man who threw the stone?"

Yes; he said, he believed that was the man, and pointed him out to Kennedy.

Where did he point him out to the constable Kennedy?

In Palace Yard, within about ten yards of his Majesty's carriage, after his Majesty alighted.

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Was that the same man as he pointed out to you in Parliament-Street?

I believe it was; but he then pointed him out with several others, but not him in particular.

The Witness was directed to withdraw.

Then Mr. JOHN WALFORD was called in again, and examined as follows :

Did you point out, in Palace Yard, to Mr. Stockdale, a man who had thrown a stone?

I certainly mentioned to Mr. Stockdale, that I thought that was the man who threw the stone or the other matter, or whatever it was that broke the window; my reason for so doing was the activity he had shewn the whole of the way.

Did you hear a conversation about an open window?

I heard one of his Majesty's footmen make the remark, and asked me, if I had seen it. I told him I had not.

You have said, in one of your answers, that you thought it was a bullet from an instrument; you have now said, it was a stone;—reconcile these answers.

I certainly, in the first instance, thought it was a bullet, or some other hard substance, from the velocity with which it came. Mr. Stockdale said he thought it was a halfpenny, or something of that kind. I said I really could not tell what it was, but that it must be something rounder and harder to occasion that blow.

Then the witness was directed to withdraw.

Then Mr. JAMES PARKER, of Pirlico, one of his Majesty's footmen, was called in; and, being sworn, was examined as follows :

You attended his Majesty to-day from his palace to the house of Lords?

Yes.

Where was your place?

At the coach door, on the right-hand.

Relate what you saw there.

We were coming down by the Ordnance Office, and about two doors from there, there was a kind of a ball, or a marble, or something of that kind, that whisked by my face; it appeared to come with great velocity, right straight forwards. I immediately said to one of the yeomen, "I think that came from a gun, a wind gun, for I heard no report." I immediately looked round, could see nothing; I looked at the glass of the carriage, and saw a little

a little hole. I looked round, to see if I could see where the ball or substance, or whatever it was, came from, and I perceived a wind w open—there was nobody at it, which gave me reason to think it came from that direction.—I said to the yeoman, “I thought it was very strange where that could come from,” or something to that effect.—I don’t know any thing more.

Can you point out the house?

It has g een outside wind ws.

Was that the only empty window?

I did n t observ any other.

Was it a window in a first floor, or where?

A p u four window.

What part of the glass was hit?

Rather lower than the middle; it was no great way from my head: I had hold of the handle of the door.

You say this was one of the houses near the Ordnance;—was it a house with a bow window?

A bow, not of the parlour, but of the floor above it.

Was it not the house next to the narrow passage that comes into Palace Yard, next the cathedral?

It was the end house, there is no other.

You made no enquiry there?

No.

Do you believe the hole in the glass was made by the bullet, or other round substance, that you heard whizzed by you?

I have no doubt about it.

Do you think that, to have done what you describe, it could have been thrown by a hand?

I think it impossible to have come in that way, and leave so small a hole in the glass.

Did you observe any thing else thrown about the same time?

Nothing at all.

Did you give such attention to the house at the time, as to say which window it came from?

No; I could not tell that it came from the window or the street; I only thought that it might come from the window.

Was there any p rson in any other window?

I do not rec llect th e was; I was so timid I looked into the carriage, and saw his Majesty was not hurt.

You have nothing more to relate?

No.

The witness was directed to withdraw.

Then JOHN SAYER, Officer of Bow Street, was called in; and, being sworn, was examined as follows:

Was you attending the procession to-day?

Yes.

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Was you near his Majesty's carriage when it came into Palace Yard?

Yes.

What did you observe?

I observed something come against the carriage.

Was you near the carriage?

Close to it.

What did you observe?

I could not tell what it was—it made a crash.

Against what part of the carriage?

Against the glass of the door.

The center, or pannel?

The center.

You did not see in what direction it came?

No; I looked up immediately.

What effect had it on the glass?

I saw the glass broke.

In what manner?

Apparently with a hole in the middle of the glass, with a cracked star up it.

Did you see any thing thrown at that time?

I did not.

Was it a large hole, or what?

I take it might be as big as my finger; a round hole; apparently round.

Did you observe any open window?

I did not.

Was any other officer with you at that time?

No.

Where was Kennedy?

A little before me; near the carriage.

Do you recollect the place where it happened?

Yes.

Do you know the house opposite to where it happened?

Yes.

Which house is it?

To the best of my knowledge, it is the house next the Abbey.

Whole house is it?

I do not know.

Did you accompany the carriage going and coming?

Yes.

Then you saw what sort of people they were—did you take notice of those who were guilty of the riots and insults going and coming?

Yes.

Did they appear the same, or a different set of men?

There were different men at different places, but some followed all the way.

What was the number, as far as you can state, that you think followed all the way?

There

There might be thirty or forty of each side the carriage.
Did those thirty or forty appear to know one another?
I cannot say that.

What was the nature of the insult they offered, in language, or how?

They were swearing and hissing.

What language?

They hallooed out, "Peace! Peace!"

Any thing further?

I heard nothing further.

You did not hear them say, "Peace! and no Gsoros!"

No.

Did you mean thirty or forty on each side the carriage, or only thirty or forty on both sides the carriage?

On each.

Then you mean eighty?

If I was to say an hundred on each side, I should not exceed.

Do you mean these hundred came and returned?

No; they might for what I know.

Did you see the man that Walford took into custody?

I saw a man that was taken into custody, but do not know it was the same he took into custody.

Was the person you saw in custody one of thirty or forty that were turbulent?

I saw him, amongst a number of other persons that were hissing, when the constable laid hold of him.

He was seized in the Park?

Yes.

Do you recollect seeing him before, in Margaret Street or Palace Yard?

No.

But you had seen him before, among the crowd?

Yes.

Where had you seen him?

I saw one of the horse soldiers put him aside, just before the constable laid hold of him.

In the Park?

Yes.

Then you had not seen him before?

No.

Be quite clear as to the number of persons who followed the coach the whole way going and coming—whether thirty or forty on each side, or more?

I should suppose there might be more than that going and coming.

The witness was directed to withdraw.

Then CHRISTOPHER KENNEDY, Bow Street Officer, was called in; and being sworn, was examined as follows:

Was you in attendance to day?

Yes.

Was you near the carriage of his Majesty?

Yes.

Did you see any thing pass in Margaret Street, or Palace Yard?

I heard something come against the glass of the door of the state coach—I looked up, and saw a hole in the glass, and the glass started.

What sort of a hole.

A small hole.

What do you suppose it was made with?

I do not know what it was made with; I do not think it could be a stone.

Why?

If it had been a stone, I should think it would have made a larger hole.

Did you observe any open window opposite to the carriage at that time?

I did not.

Did you observe a number of people about the coach?

Yes.

Did they follow the coach going, and on its return?

Yes.

Did they appear to be the same party on its coming and returning?

Yes, they did.

In what manner did they behave?

Some huzzaing, some hissing, and some calling for peace.

Any thing on the return?

On returning, I heard several somethings come against the state coach.

What things?

I do not know. I did see one stone, and that about as big as a large walnut.

Did you go with the coach till it got back to the palace?

Yes.

Was there a glass broke, then?

Entering the Stable Yard, I heard something come against the glass.

The witness was directed to withdraw.

T R E A T Y

OF Amity, Commerce, and Navigation, between His Britannic Majesty, and the United States of America.
Signed at London, the 19th of November, 1794.

His Majesty's Ratification.

G E O R G E R A

GEORGE the Third, by the Grace of God, King of Great Britain, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, Duke of Brunswick and Lunenburg, Arch-Treasurer and Prince Elector of the Holy Roman Empire, &c. To all and singular to whom these presents shall come, greeting: Whereas our right trusty and well-beloved counsellor, William Wyndham, Baron Grenville of Wotton, our Principal Secretary of State for foreign Affairs, &c. &c. did, on our part, together with the Plenipotentiary of our good friends the United States of America, conclude and sign at London, on the nineteenth day of November, one thousand, seven hundred and ninety-four, a treaty of Amity, Commerce, and Navigation, between us and our said good friends: And whereas a certain additional article has, on the part of the said United States, been proposed to be annexed to the said treaty as a part thereof; to which addition We are willing to consent; the said treaty and additional article being in the words following;

HIS Britannick Majesty and the United States of America, being desirous, by a treaty of Amity, Commerce, and Navigation, to terminate their differences in such a manner as, without reference to the merits of their respective complaints and pretensions, may be the best calculated to produce mutual satisfaction and good understanding; and also to regulate the commerce and navigation between their respective countries, territories, and people, in such a manner as to render the same reciprocally beneficial and satisfactory; they have, respectively, named their plenipotentiaries, and given them full powers to treat of and conclude the said treaty; that is to say, his Britannick Majesty has named, for his plenipotentiary, the Right Hon. William Wyndham, Baron Grenville of Wotton, one of his Majesty's Privy Council, and his Majesty's principal Secretary of State for foreign Affairs; and the President of the said United States, by and with the advice and consent of the senate thereof, hath appointed for their plenipotentiary the Honourable John Jay, Chief Justice of the said United States, and their Envoy Extraordinary to his Majesty, who have agreed on and concluded the following articles:

ARTICLE I.

There shall be a firm, inviolable, and universal peace, and a true and honest friendship between his Britannick Majesty, his heirs and successors, and the United States of America; and between their respective countries, territories, towns, and people, of every degree, without exception of persons or places.

ARTICLE II.

His Majesty will withdraw all his troops and garrisons from all ports and places within the boundaries assigned by the treaty of peace to the United States.

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This evacuation shall take place on or before the first day of June, 1796, and all the proper measures shall in the interval be taken by concert between the government of the United States and his Majesty's Governor-general in America, for settling the previous arrangements which may be necessary respecting the delivery of the said posts; the United States, in the mean time, at their discretion, extending their settlements to any part within the said boundary line, except within the precincts or jurisdiction of any of the said posts. All settlers and traders within the precincts or jurisdiction of the said posts, shall continue to enjoy, unmolested, all their property of every kind, and shall be protected therein; they shall be at full liberty to remain there, or to remove with all or any part of their effects; and it shall also be free to them to sell their land, houses, or effects, or to retain the property thereof, at their discretion. Such of them as shall continue to reside within the said boundary lines shall not be compelled to become citizens of the United States, or to take any oath of allegiance to the government thereof, but they shall be at full liberty to do so, if they think proper; and they shall make and declare their election within one year after the evacuation aforesaid. And all persons who shall continue there after the expiration of the said year, without having declared their intention of remaining subjects of his Britannic Majesty, shall be considered as having elected to become citizens of the United States.

ARTICLE III.

It is agreed, that it shall at all times be free to his Majesty's subjects, and to the citizens of the United States, and also the Indians dwelling on either side of the said boundary line, freely to pass and repass, by land or inland navigation, into the respective territories and countries of the two parties on the continent of America (the country within the limits of the Hudson's Bay company only excepted) and to navigate all the lakes, rivers, and waters thereof, and freely to carry on trade and commerce with each other. But it is understood, that this article does not extend to the admission of vessels of the United States into the sea-ports, harbours, bays, or creeks of his Majesty's said territories; nor into such parts of the rivers in his Majesty's said territories as are between the mouth thereof and the highest port of entry from the sea, except in small vessels trading *bona fide* between Montreal and Quebec, under such regulations as shall be established to prevent the possibility of any frauds in this respect; nor to the admission of British vessels from the sea into the rivers of the United States, beyond the highest ports of entry for vessels from the sea. The river Mississippi shall, however, according to the treaty of peace, be entirely open to both parties; and it is farther agreed, that all the ports and places on its eastern side, to which soever of the parties belonging, may freely be resorted to, and used by both parties, in as simple a manner as any of the Atlantic ports or places of the United States, or any of the Ports or places of his Majesty in Great Britain.

All goods and merchandize, whose importation into his Majesty's said territories in America shall not be entirely prohibited, may freely, for the purposes of commerce, be carried into the same, in the manner aforesaid, by the citizens of the United States; and such goods and merchandize shall be subject to no higher or other duties than would be payable by his Majesty's subjects on the importation of the same from Europe into the said territories. And, in like manner, all goods and merchandize, whose importation into the United States shall not be wholly prohibited, may freely, for the purpose of commerce, be carried into the same, in the manner aforesaid, by his Majesty's subjects; and such goods and merchandize shall be subject to no higher or other duties than would be payable by the citizens of the United States on the importation of the same, in vessels, into the Atlantic ports of the said States. And all goods not to be exported from the said territories respectively, may, in like manner, be exported out of the same by the two parties respectively, paying duty as

No duty of entry shall ever be levied, by either party, on peltries brought by land or inland navigation into the said territories respectively; nor shall the Indians, passing or repassing with their own proper goods and effects, of whatever nature, pay for the same any impost or duty whatever; but goods in bales, or other large packages unusual among Indians, shall not be considered as goods belonging *bonâ fide* to Indians.

No higher or other tolls or rates of ferriage than what are or shall be payable by natives, shall be demanded on either side; and no duties shall be payable on any goods which shall merely be carried over any of the portages or carrying-places on either side, for the purpose of being immediately re-embarked and carried to some other place or places. But, as by this stipulation, it is only meant to secure to each party a free passage across the portages on both sides, it is agreed, that this exemption from duty shall extend only to such goods as are carried in the usual and direct road across the portage, and are not attempted to be in any manner sold or exchanged during their passage across the same; and proper regulations may be established to prevent the possibility of any frauds in this respect.

As this article is intended to render, in a great degree, the local advantages of each party common to both, and thereby to promote a disposition favourable to friendship and good neighbourhood, it is agreed that the respective governments will mutually promote this amicable intercourse, by causing speedy and impartial justice to be done, and necessary protection to be extended to all who may be concerned therein.

ARTICLE IV.

Whereas it is uncertain whether the river Mississippi extends so far to the northward as to be intersected by a line to be drawn due west from the Lake of the Woods, in the manner mentioned in the treaty of peace between his Majesty and the United States; it is agreed, that measures shall be taken, in concert with his Majesty's government in America, and the government of the United States, for making a joint survey of the said river, from one degree of latitude below the Falls of St. Anthony, to the principal source or sources of the said river, and also of the parts adjacent thereto; and that if, on the result of such survey, it should appear, that the said river would not be intersected by such a line as is above-mentioned, the two parties will thereupon proceed, by amicable negotiation, to regulate the boundary line in that quarter, as well as all other points, to be adjusted between the said parties, according to justice and mutual convenience, and in conformity to the intent of the said treaty.

ARTICLE V.

Whereas doubts have arisen what river was truly intended under the name of the River St. Croix, mentioned in the said treaty of peace, and forming a part of the boundary therein described, that question shall be referred to the final decision of commissioners, to be appointed in the following manner, viz.

One commissioner shall be named by his Majesty, and one by the President of the United States, by and with the advice and consent of the senate thereof; and the said two commissioners shall agree, they shall each propose one person, and of the two names so proposed, one shall be drawn by lot in the presence of the two original commissioners; and the three commissions so appointed shall be sworn impartially to examine and decide the said question, according to such evidence as shall respectively be laid before them, on the part of the British government and of the United States. The said commissioners shall meet at Halifax, and shall have power to adjourn to such other place or places as they shall think fit. They shall have power to appoint a Secretary, and to employ such

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such surveyors or other persons as they shall judge necessary. The said commissioners shall, by a declaration under their hands and seals, decide what river is the river St. Croix intended by the treaty. The said declaration shall contain a description of the said river, and shall particularize the latitude and longitude of its mouth and of its source. Duplicates of this declaration, and of the statements of their accounts, and of the journal of their proceedings, shall be delivered by them to the agent of his Majesty and to the agent of the United States, who may be respectively appointed and authorized to manage the business on behalf of the respective governments; and both parties agree to consider such decision as final and conclusive, so as that the same shall never thereafter be called into question, or made the subject of dispute or difference between them.

ARTICLE VI.

Whereas it is alleged, by divers British merchants, and others his Majesty's subjects, that debts to a considerable amount, which were *bonâ fide* contracted before the peace, still remain owing to them by citizens or inhabitants of the United States, and that, by the operation of various lawful impediments since the peace not only the full recovery of the said debts has been delayed, but also the value and security thereof have been, in several instances, impaired and lessened, so that, by the ordinary course of judicial proceedings, the British creditors cannot now obtain, and actually have and receive full and adequate compensation for the losses and damages which they have thereby sustained; it is agreed, that in all such cases where full compensation for such losses and damages cannot, for whatever reason,

same to the said creditors; but it is expressly understood that this provision shall extend to such losses only as have been occasioned by the lawful impediments aforesaid, and is not to extend to losses occasioned by such insolvency of the debtors, or other causes as would equally have operated to produce such loss if the said impediments had not existed, nor to such losses or damages as have been occasioned by the manifest delay or negligence, or wilful omission, of the claimant.

For the purpose of ascertaining the amount of any such losses and damages, five Commissioners shall be appointed, and authorized to meet and act in manner following, viz. two of them shall be appointed by his Majesty, two of them by the President of the United States, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate thereof, and the fifth by the unanimous voice of the other four; and if they should not agree in such choice, then the Commissioners named by the two parties shall respectively propose one person, and of the two names so proposed one shall be drawn by lot in the presence of the four original commissioners.

When the five commissioners thus appointed shall first meet, they shall, before they proceed to act respectively, take the following oath or affirmation, in the presence of each other, which oath or affirmation being so taken and duly attested, shall be entered on the record of their proceedings, viz. I, A. B. one of the commissioners appointed in pursuance of the sixth Article of the Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation, between his Britannic Majesty and the United States of America, do solemnly swear or affirm, that I will honestly, diligently, impartially, and carefully examine, and, to the best of my judgment, according to justice and equity, decide all such complaints as under the said article shall be preferred to the said commissioners; and that I will forbear to act as a commissioner in any case in which I may be personally interested.

Three of the said commissioners shall constitute a board, and shall have power to act appertaining to the said commission, provided that one of the commissioners named on each side, and the fifth commissioner shall be present; and the decision shall be made by the majority of the voices of the commissioners. Eighteen months from the day on which the said commissioners shall

shall form a board, and be ready to proceed to business, are assigned for receiving complaints and applications; but they are nevertheless authorized in any particular cases, in which it shall appear to them to be reasonable and just, to extend the said term of eighteen months, for any term not exceeding six months, after the expiration thereof. The said commissioners shall first meet at Philadelphia; but they shall have power to adjourn from place to place as they shall see cause.

The said commissioners, in examining the complaints and applications so preferred to them, are empowered and required, in pursuance of the true intent and meaning of this article, to take into their consideration all claims, whether of principal or interest, or balances of principal and interest, and to determine the same respectively, according to the merits of the several cases, due regard being had to all the circumstances thereof, and as equity and justice shall appear to them to require. And the said commissioners shall have power to examine all such persons as shall come before them, on oath or affirmation, touching the premises; and also to receive in evidence, according as they may think most consistent with equity and justice, all written depositions, or books, or papers, or copies, or extracts thereof, every such deposition, book or paper, or copy or extract, being duly authenticated, either according to the legal forms now respectively existing in the two countries, or in such other manner as the said commissioners shall see cause to require or allow.

The award of the said commissioners, or of any three of them as aforesaid, shall in all cases be final and conclusive, both as to the justice of the claim, and to the amount of the sum to be paid to the creditor or claimant: and the United States undertake to cause the sum so awarded to be paid in specie to such creditor or claimant without deduction; and at such time or times, and at such place or places, as shall be awarded by the said commissioners; and on condition of such releases or assignments to be given by the creditor or claimant, as by the said commissioners may be directed: provided always, that no such payment shall be fixed by the said commissioners to take place sooner than twelve months, from the day of the exchange of the ratifications of this treaty.

ARTICLE VII.

Whereas complaints have been made by divers merchants and others, citizens of the United States, that, during the course of the war in which his Majesty is now engaged, they have sustained considerable losses and damage, by reason of irregular or illegal captures or condemnations of their vessels and other property, under colour of authority or commissions from his Majesty; and that, from various circumstances belonging to the said cases, adequate compensation for the losses and damages so sustained cannot now be actually obtained, had, and received by the ordinary course of judicial proceedings: it is agreed, that in all such cases where adequate compensation cannot, for whatever reason, be now actually obtained, had and received by the said merchants and others in the ordinary course of justice, full and complete compensation for the same will be made by the British government to the said complainants. But it is distinctly understood that this provision is not to extend to such losses or damages as have been occasioned by the manifest delay or negligence, or wilful omission of the claimants.

That, for the purpose of ascertaining the amount of any such losses and damages, five commissioners shall be appointed and authorized to act in London, exactly in manner directed with respect to those mentioned in the preceding article, and after having taken the same oath or affirmation (*mutatis mutandis*) the same term of eighteen months is also assigned for the reception of claims, and they are in like manner authorized to extend the same in particular cases. They shall receive testimony, books, papers and evidence in the same latitude, and exercise the like discretion and powers respecting that subject; and shall decide the claims in question according to the merits of the several cases, and to justice, equity, and the

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laws of nations. The award of the said commissioners, or any such three of them as aforesaid, shall, in all cases, be final and conclusive, both as to the justice of the claim, and to the amount of the sum to be paid to the claimant; and his Britannic Majesty undertakes to cause the same to be paid to such claimant in specie, without any deduction, in such place or places, and at such time or times, as shall be awarded by the same commissioners, and on condition of such releases or assignments to be given by the claimants, as by the said commissioners may be directed.

And whereas certain merchants and others, his Majesty's subjects, complain, that, in the course of the war, they have sustained loss and damage by reason of the capture of their vessels, and merchandize taken within the limits and jurisdiction of the States, and brought into the ports of the same, or taken by vessels originally armed in ports of the said States.

It is agreed, that in all such cases, where restitution shall not have been made agreeably to the tenor of the letter from Mr. Jefferson to Mr. Hammond, dated at Philadelphia, September 5, 1793, (a copy of which is annexed to this treaty) the complaints of the parties shall be, and hereby are referred to the commissioners to be appointed by virtue of this Article, who are hereby authorized and required to proceed in the like manner relative to these as to the other cases committed to them; and the United States undertake to pay to the complainants or claimants in specie, without deduction, the amount of such sums as shall be awarded to them respectively by the said commissioners, and at the times and places which in such awards shall be specified; and on condition of such releases or assignments to be given by the claimants as in the said awards may be directed. And it is further agreed, that not only the now existing cases of both descriptions, but also all such as shall exist at the time of exchanging the ratifications of this treaty, shall be considered as being within the provisions intent and meaning of this article.

ARTICLE VIII.

It is further agreed, that the commissioners mentioned in this and in the two preceding articles shall be respectively paid in such a manner as shall be agreed between the two parties; such agreement being to be settled at the time of the exchange of the ratifications of this treaty. And all other expenses attending the said commissions shall be defrayed jointly by the two parties, the same being previously ascertained and allowed by the majority of the commissioners. And in the case of death, sickness or necessary absence, the place of every such commissioner respectively shall be supplied in the same manner as such commissioner was first appointed, and the new commissioner shall take the same oath or affirmation, and do the same duties.

ARTICLE IX.

It is agreed, that British subjects, who now hold lands in the territories of the United States, and American citizens, who now hold lands in the dominions of his Majesty, shall continue to hold them according to the nature and tenure of their respective states and titles therein; and may grant, sell or devise the same to whom they please, in like manner as if they were natives; and that neither they, nor their heirs or assigns, shall, so far as may respect the said lands, and the legal remedies incident thereto, be regarded as aliens.

ARTICLE X.

Neither the debts due from individuals of the one nation to individuals of the other, nor monies, which they may have in the public funds, or in the private banks, shall ever, in any event of war or national differences, be seized or confiscated, it being unjust and impolitic that debts and engagements contracted

contracted and made by individuals having confidence in each other, and in their respective governments, should ever be destroyed or impaired by national authority, on account of national differences and discontents.

ARTICLE XI.

It is agreed between his Majesty and the United States of America, that there shall be a reciprocal and entirely perfect liberty of navigation and commerce between their respective people, in the manner, under the limitations, and on the conditions specified in the following articles,

ARTICLE XII.

His Majesty consents, that it shall and may be lawful, during the time hereinafter limited for the citizens of the United States to carry to any of his Majesty's islands and ports in the West Indies from the United States, in their own vessels, not being above the burthen of seventy tons, any goods or merchandizes, being of the growth, manufacture or produce of the said States, which it is or may be lawful to carry to the said islands or ports from the said States in British vessels; and that the said American vessels shall be subject there to no other or higher tonnage duties or charges than shall be payable by British vessels in the ports of the United States; and that the cargoes of the said American vessels shall be subject there to no other or higher duties or charges than shall be payable on the like articles, if imported there from the said States in British vessels.

And his Majesty also consents, that it shall be lawful for the said American citizens to purchase, load, and carry away, in their said vessels, to the United States, from the said islands and ports, all such articles, being of the growth, manufacture or produce of the said islands, as may now by law be carried from thence to the said States in British vessels, and subject only to the same duties and charges on exportation to which British vessels and their cargoes are or shall be subject in similar circumstances.

Provided always, that the said American vessels do carry and land their cargoes in the United States only, it being expressly agreed and declared, that during the continuance of this article, the United States will prohibit and restrain the carrying any molasses, sugar, coffee, cocoa or cotton, in American vessels, either from his Majesty's islands or from the United States, to any part of the world, except the United States, reasonable sea stores excepted.

Provided also, that it shall and may be lawful, during the same period, for British vessels to import from the said islands into the United States, and to export from the United States to the said islands, all articles whatever, being of the growth, produce or manufacture of the said islands, or of the United States respectively, which now may, by the laws of the said States, be so imported and exported; And that the cargoes of the said British vessels shall be subject to no other or higher duties or charges than shall be payable on the same articles, if so imported or exported in American vessels.

It is agreed that this article, and every matter and thing therein contained, shall continue to be in force during the continuance of the war in which his Majesty is now engaged; and also for two years from and after the day of the signature of the preliminary or other articles of peace by which the same may be terminated.

And it is further agreed, that, at the expiration of the said term, the two contracting parties will endeavour further to regulate their commerce in this respect according to the situation in which his Majesty may then find himself with respect

ARTICLE XIII. TREATY OF AMITY, &c. BETWEEN HIS BRITANNIC MAJESTY AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

to the West Indies, and with a view to such arrangements as may best conduce to the mutual advantage and extension of commerce.

And the said parties will then also renew their discussion, and endeavour to agree, whether in any or what cases neutral vessels shall not be deemed to be carrying property, and in what cases, provisions and other articles, not generally contraband, may be permitted. But, in the mean time, they do declare to each other in these respects shall be regulated by the articles hereinafter inserted on those subjects.

ARTICLE XIII.

His Majesty consents that the vessels belonging to the citizens of the United States of America shall be admitted and lawfully received in all the sea ports and harbours of the British territories in the East Indies. And that the citizens of the said United States may freely carry on a trade between the said territories and the said United States in all articles, of which the importation or exportation respectively to or from the said territories shall not be entirely prohibited. Provided only, that it shall not be lawful for them, in any time of war between the British government and any other power or powers, to export from the said territories, without the special permission of the British government there, any military stores or naval stores, or rice. The citizens of the United States shall pay for their vessels, when admitted into the said ports, no other or higher tonnage duty than shall be payable on British vessels when admitted into the port of the United States. And they shall pay no other or higher duties or charges on the importation or exportation of the cargoes of the said vessels than shall be payable on the same articles when imported or exported in British vessels. But it is expressly agreed, that the vessels of the United States shall not carry any of the articles exported by them from the said British territories to any port or place, except to some port or place in America, where the same shall be unladen, and such regulations shall be adopted by both parties as shall, from time to time, be found necessary to enforce the due and faithful observance of this stipulation.

It is also understood, that the permission granted by this article is not to extend to allow the vessels of the United States to carry on any part of the coasting trade of the said British territories, but vessels going with their original cargoes, or part thereof from one port of discharge to another, are not to be considered as carrying on the coasting trade. Neither is this article to be construed to allow the citizens of the said States to settle or reside within the said territories, or to go into the interior parts thereof, without the permission of the British government established there; and if any transgression should be attempted against the regulations of the British Government in this respect, the observance of the same shall and may be enforced against the citizens of America, in the same manner as against British subjects, or others transgressing the same rule. And the citizens of the United States whenever they arrive in any port or harbour in the said territories, or if they should be permitted, in manner aforesaid, to go to any other place therein, shall always be subject to the laws, government, and jurisdiction of whatever nature established in such harbour, port, or place, according to the same may be, the citizens of the United States may also touch, for refreshment, at the island of St. Helena, but subject, in all respects, to such regulations as the British government may from time to time establish there.

ARTICLE XIV.

There shall be between all the dominions of his Majesty in Europe, and the territories of the United States, a reciprocal and perfect liberty of commerce and navigation. The people and inhabitants of the two countries respectively shall have liberty freely and securely, and without hindrance and molestation, to come with their ships and cargoes to the land, countries, cities, ports, places and rivers, within the dominions and territories aforesaid, to enter into the same, to resort there.

there, and to remain and reside there, without any limitation of time: also hire and possess houses and warehouses for the purposes of their commerce, and generally, the merchants and traders on each side shall enjoy the most complete protection and security for their commerce, but subject always, as to what respects this article, to the laws and statutes of the two countries respectively.

ARTICLE XV.

It is agreed that no other or higher duties shall be paid by the ships or merchandize of the one party in the ports of the other, than such as are paid by the like vessels or merchandize of all other nations. Nor shall any other or higher duty be imposed in one country on the importation of any articles, the growth, produce, or manufacture of the other, than are or shall be payable on the importation of the like articles, being of the growth, produce, or manufacture of any other foreign country. Nor shall any prohibition be imposed on the exportation or importation of any articles to or from the territories of the two parties respectively, which shall not equally extend to all other nations.

But the British government reserves to itself the right of imposing on American vessels into the British ports in Europe a tonnage duty equal to that which shall be payable by British vessels in the ports of America; and also such duty as may be adequate to countervail the difference of duty now payable on the importation of European and Asiatic goods when imported into the United States in British or in American vessels.

The two parties agree to treat for the most exact equalization of the duties to the respective navigation of their subjects and people, in such manner as may be most beneficial to the two countries. The arrangements for this purpose shall be made at the same time with those mentioned at the conclusion of the twelfth article of this treaty, and are to be considered as a part thereof. In the interval, it is agreed, that the United States will not impose any new or additional tonnage duties on British vessels, nor increase the now subsisting difference between the duties payable on the importation of any articles in British or in American vessels.

ARTICLE XVI.

It shall be free for the two contracting parties respectively to appoint Consuls for the protection of trade, to reside in the dominions and territories aforesaid; and the said Consuls shall enjoy those liberties and rights which belong to them by reason of their function. But before any Consul shall act as such, he shall be in the usual forms approved and remitted by the party to whom he is sent; and it is hereby declared to be lawful and proper, that in case of illegal or improper conduct towards the laws or government, a Consul may either be punished according to law, if the laws will reach the case, or be dismissed, or even sent back, the offended government assigning to the other their reasons for the same.

Either of the parties may except from the residence of Consuls such particular places as such party shall judge proper to be excepted.

ARTICLE XVII.

It is agreed, that in all cases where vessels shall be captured or detained, on just suspicion of having on board enemy's property, or of carrying to the enemy any of the articles which are contraband of war, the said vessel shall be brought to the nearest or most convenient port; and if any property of an enemy shall be found on board such vessel, that part only which belongs to the enemy shall be made prize, and the vessel shall be at liberty to proceed with the remainder without any impediment. And it is agreed, that all proper measures shall be taken to prevent delay, in deciding the cases of ships or cargoes so brought in for adjudication.

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Majesty: and in the payment or recovery of any indemnification adjudged or agreed to be paid to the masters or owners of such ships.

ARTICLE XVIII.

In order to regulate what is in future to be esteemed contraband of war, it is agreed, that under the said denomination shall be comprised all arms and implements serving for the purposes of war, by land or by sea, such as cannon, muskets, mortars, petardes, bombs, granadoes, carcasses, faucusses, carriages for cannon, musket refts, bandoliers, gunpowder, match, saltpetre, ball, pikes, swords, head-pieces, cuirasses, halberts, lances, javelins, horses, horse-furniture, holsters, belts, and, generally, all other implements of war; as also timber for ship-building, tar or resin, copper in sheets, sails, hemp and cordage, and generally, whatever may serve directly to the equipment of vessels, unwrought iron and fir planks only excepted; and all the above articles are hereby declared to be just objects of confiscation, whenever they are attempted to be carried to an enemy.

And whereas the difficulty of agreeing on the precise cases in which alone provisions and other articles, not generally contraband, may be regarded as such, renders it expedient to provide against the inconveniences and misunderstandings which might hence arise: It is further agreed, that whenever any such articles so becoming contraband according to the existing laws of nations, shall for that reason be seized, the same shall not be confiscated, but the owners thereof shall be speedily and completely indemnified; and the captors, or, in their default, the government under whose authority they act, shall pay to the masters or owners of such vessel the full value of all articles, with a reasonable mercantile profit thereon, together with the freight, and also the demurrage incident to such detention.

And whereas it frequently happens, that vessels sail for a port or place belonging to an enemy, without knowing that the same is either besieged, blockaded, or invested; it is agreed that every vessel so circumstanced may be turned away from such port or place, but she shall not be detained, nor her cargo, if not contraband, be confiscated, unless, after notice, she shall again attempt to enter. But she shall be permitted to go to any port or place she may think proper; nor shall any vessel or goods of either party, that may have entered into such port or place before the same was besieged, blockaded, or invested by the other, and be found therein after the reduction or surrender of such place, be liable to confiscation, but shall be restored to the owners or proprietors thereof.

ARTICLE XIX.

And that more abundant care be taken for the security of the respective subjects and citizens of the contracting parties, and to prevent their suffering injuries by the men of war or privateers of either party, all commanders of ships of war and privateers, and all others the said subjects and citizens, shall forbear doing any damage to those of the other party, or committing any outrage against them; and if they act to the contrary they shall be punished, and shall also be bound in their persons and estates to make satisfaction and reparation for all damages, and the interest thereof, of whatever nature the said damages may be.

For this cause all commanders of privateers, before they receive their commissions, shall hereafter be obliged to give, before a competent judge, sufficient security by at least two responsible surities, who have no interest in the said privateer, each of whom, together with the said commander, shall be jointly and severally bound in the sum of fifteen hundred pounds sterling; or, if such ship be manned with above one hundred and fifty seamen or soldiers, in the sum of twenty thousand sterling, to satisfy all damages and injuries, which the said privateer, commanders or men, or any of them, may do or commit, during their cruise,

MAJESTY AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: 25

crize, contrary to the tenor of this treaty, or to the laws and instructions for, repulating their conduct; and further, that in all cases of aggressions the said commissions shall be revoked and annulled.

It is also agreed, that whenever a judge of a Court of Admiralty of either of the parties shall pronounce sentence against any vessel, or goods, or property belonging to the subjects or citizens of the other party, a formal and duly authenticated copy of all the proceedings in the cause, and of the said sentence, shall, if required, be delivered to the commander of the said vessel without the smallest delay, he paying all legal fees and demands for the same.

ARTICLE XX.

It is further agreed, that both the said contracting parties shall not only refuse to receive any pirate into any of their ports, haven, or towns, or permit any of their inhabitants to receive, protect, harbour, conceal, or assist them in any manner, but will bring to condign punishment all such inhabitants as shall be guilty of such acts or offences.

And all their ships, with the goods or merchandizes taken by them, and brought into the port of either of the said parties, shall be seized as far as they can be discovered, and shall be restored to the owner, or the factors or agents duly deputized and authorized in writing, by them (proper evidence being shewn in the court of Admiralty for proving the property) even in case such effects should have fallen into other hands by sale, if it be proved that the buyers knew, or had good reason to believe or suspect that they had been piratically taken.

ARTICLE XXI.

It is likewise agreed, that the subjects and citizens of the two nations shall not do any acts of hostility or violence against each other, nor accept commissions or instructions to act from any foreign prince or state, enemies to the other party; nor shall the enemies of one of the parties be permitted to invite, or endeavour to enlist in the military service any of the subjects or citizens of the other party; and the laws against all such offences and aggressions shall be punctually executed. And if any subject or citizen of the said parties respectively shall accept any foreign commission, or letter of marque, for arming any vessel to act as a privateer against the other party, and be taken by the other party, it is hereby declared to be lawful for the said party to treat and punish the said subject or citizen, having such commission or letters of marque, as a pirate.

ARTICLE XXII.

It is expressly stipulated that neither of the said contracting parties will order or authorize any acts of reprisal against the other, on complaints of injuries or damages. Still the said party shall first have presented to the other a statement thereof, verified by competent proof, and evidence, and demanded justice and satisfaction, and the same shall either have been refused or unreasonably delayed.

ARTICLE XXIII.

The ships of war of each of the contracting parties shall, at all times, be hospitably received in the ports of the other, their officers and crews paying due respect to the laws and government of the country. The officers shall be treated with that respect which is due to the commissions which they bear, and if any insult should be offered to them by any of the inhabitants, all offenders in that respect shall be punished as disturbers of the peace and amity between the two countries. And his Majesty consents, that in case an American vessel should, by stress of weather, danger from enemies, or other misfortunes, be reduced to the

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necessity of seeking shelter in any of his Majesty's ports, into which such vessels could not in ordinary cases claim to be admitted, she shall, on manifesting that necessity to the satisfaction of the government of the place, be hospitably received and permitted to rest, and to purchase at the market price such necessaries as she may stand in need of, conformably to such orders and regulations as the government of the place, having respect to circumstances of each case, shall prescribe. She shall not be allowed to break hulk or unload her cargo, unless the same shall be *bona fide* necessary to her being refitted; nor shall she be permitted to sell any part of her cargo, unless so much only as may be necessary to defray her expenses, and then not without the express permission of the government of the place; nor shall she be obliged to pay any duties whatever, except only on such articles as she may be permitted to sell for the purpose aforesaid.

ARTICLE XXIV.

It shall not be lawful for any foreign privateers (not being subjects or citizens of either of the said parties) who have commissions from any other prince or state in enmity with either nation, to arm their ships in the ports of either of the said parties, nor to sell what they have taken, nor in any other manner to exchange the same; nor shall they be allowed to purchase more provisions than shall be necessary for their going to the nearest port of that prince or state from whom they obtained their commissions.

ARTICLE XXV.

It shall be lawful for the ships of war and privateers, belonging to the said parties respectively, to carry whithersoever they please the ships and goods taken from their enemies, without being obliged to pay any fee to the offices of the Admiralty, or to any judges whatever; nor shall the said prizes, when they arrive at and enter the ports of the said parties, be detained or seized; neither shall the searchers or other officers of those places visit such prizes (except for the purpose of preventing the carrying of any part of the cargo thereof on shore, in any manner contrary to the established laws of revenue, navigation, or commerce) nor shall such officers take cognizance of the validity of such prizes; but they shall be at liberty to hoist sail, and depart as speedily as may be, and carry their said prizes to the place mentioned in their commissions or patents, which the commanders of the said ships of war or privateers shall be obliged to shew.

No shelter or refuge shall be given in their ports to such as have made a prize upon the subjects or citizens of either of the said parties; but if forced by stress of weather, or the dangers of the sea, to enter therein, particular care shall be taken to hasten their departure, and to cause them to retire as soon as possible. Nothing in this treaty contained, shall, however, be construed to operate contrary to the former and existing public treaties with other sovereigns or states. And the two parties agree, that while they continue in amity, neither of them shall in future make any treaty that shall be inconsistent with this or the preceding article.

Neither of the said parties shall permit the ships or goods belonging to the subjects or citizens of the other to be taken within cannon shot of the coast, nor in the bays, ports, or rivers of their territories, by ships of war, or other vessels, without commission from any prince, republic, or state whatever. But, in case it should happen, the party, whose territorial rights shall thus have been violated, shall use his utmost endeavours to obtain, from the offending party, full and satisfaction for the vessel or vessels so taken, whether the same be vessels of war or merchant vessels.

ARTICLE

ARTICLE XXVI.

If at any time a rupture should take place (which God forbid) between his Majesty and the United States, the merchants and others of each of the two nations residing in the dominions of the other, shall have the privilege of remaining and continuing their trade so long as they behave peaceably, and commit no offence against the laws; and in case their conduct should render them suspected, and the respective governments should think proper to order them to remove, the term of twelve months, from the publication of the order, shall be allowed them for that purpose, to remove with their families, effects and property; but this favour shall not be extended to those who shall act contrary to the established laws; and for greater certainty it is declared, that such rupture shall not be deemed to exist while negotiations for accommodating differences shall be depending, nor until the respective ambassadors or ministers, if such there shall be, shall be recalled or sent home on account of such differences, and not on account of personal misconduct, according to the nature and degrees of which both parties retain their rights, either to request the recall, or immediately to send home the ambassador or minister of the other; and that without prejudice to their mutual friendship and good understanding.

ARTICLE XXVII.

It is further agreed, that his Majesty and the United States, on mutual requisitions by them respectively, or by their respective ministers, or officers authorized to make the same, will deliver up to justice all persons, who being charged with murder or forgery, committed within the jurisdiction of either, shall seek an asylum within any of the countries of the other, provided that this shall only be done on such evidence of criminality, as, according to the laws of the place where the fugitive or person so charged shall be found, would justify his apprehension and commitment for trial, if the offence had there been committed. The expence of such apprehension and delivery shall be borne and defrayed by those who make the requisition and receive the fugitive.

ARTICLE XXVIII.

It is agreed that the first ten Articles of this Treaty shall be permanent, and that the subsequent Articles, except the twelfth, shall be limited in their duration to twelve years, to be computed from the day on which the ratifications of this treaty shall be exchanged, but subject to this condition: that whereas the said twelfth Article will expire, by the limitation therein contained, at the end of two years from the signing the preliminary or other articles of peace which shall terminate the present war in which his Majesty is engaged; it is agreed, that proper measures shall be taken for bringing the subject of that Article into amicable treaty and discussion, so early before the expiration of the said term, as that new arrangements on that head may by that time be perfected, and ready to take place. But should unfortunately happen, that his Majesty and the United States should not be able to agree on such new arrangements, in that case all the Articles of this Treaty, except the first ten, shall then cease and expire together.

Lastly, This treaty, when the same shall have been ratified by his Majesty, and by the President of the United States, by and with the advice and consent of their Senate, and the respective ratifications mutually exchanged, shall be binding and obligatory to his Majesty, and on the said States, and shall be by them respectively executed and observed with punctuality, and the most sincere regard to good faith. And whereas it will be expedient, in order the better to facilitate intercourse and obviate difficulties, that other articles be proposed and added to this treaty, which articles, from want of time and other circumstances, cannot now be perfected, it is agreed, that the said parties will, from time to time, readily treat of and examining such articles, and will sincerely endeavour so to form them, as that they may

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MAJESTY and the President of the United States of America, shall be added to, and make a part of this treaty.

In faith whereof, we, the undersigned ministers plenipotentiary of his Majesty the King of Great Britain and the United States of America, have signed this present treaty, and have caused to be affixed thereto the seal of our arms.

Done at London, this Nineteenth Day of November, One thousand seven hundred and ninety-four.

GRENVILLE.
JOHN JAY.

(L. S.)
(L. S.)

Philadelphia, Sept. 5, 1793.

SIR,

I AM honoured with yours of August 30. Mine of the 7th of that month assured you, that measures were taken for excluding from all further asylum in our ports vessels armed in them to cruise on nations with which we are at peace, and for the restoration of the prizes, the *Lovely Lass*, *Prince William Henry*, and the *Jane*, of Dublin; and that should the measures for restitution fail in their effect, the President considered it as incumbent on the United States to make compensation for the vessels.

We are bound by our treaties with three of the Belligerent nations, by all the means in our power, to protect and defend their vessels and effects in our ports or waters, or on the seas near our shores, and to recover and restore the same to the right owners when taken from them. If all the means in our power are used, and fail in their effect, we are not bound by our treaties with those nations to make compensation.

Though we have no similar treaty with Great Britain, it was the opinion of the President, that we should use towards that nation the same rule, which, under this article, was to govern us with the other nations; and even to extend it to captures made on the high seas, and brought into our ports, if done by vessels which had been armed within them.

Having, for particular reasons, forbore to use all the means in our power for the restitution of the three vessels mentioned in my letter of August 7th, the President thought it incumbent on the United States to make compensation for them. And though nothing was said in that letter of other vessels taken under like circumstances, and brought in after the 5th of June, and before the date of that letter, yet when the same forbearance had taken place, it was and is his opinion, that compensation would be equally due.

As to prizes made under the same circumstances, and brought in after the date of that letter, the President determined, that all the means in our power should be used for their restitution. If these fail, as we should not be bound by our treaties to make compensation to the other powers in the analogous case, he did not mean to give an opinion that it ought to be done to Great Britain. But any case shall arise subsequent to that date, the circumstances of which are them on similar ground with those before it, the President would think it equally incumbent on the United States.

are given to the governors of the different States, to use all the means in our power for securing prizes of this last description found within their ports;

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ports; though they will of course take measures to be informed of them, and the general government has given them the aid of the Custom-house officers for this purpose, yet you will be sensible of the importance of multiplying the channels of their information, as far as shall depend on yourself, or any person under your direction, in order that the governors may use the means in their power for making restitution.

Without knowledge of the capture they cannot restore it. It would always be best to give the notice to them directly; but any information which you shall be pleased to send to me also at any time shall be forwarded to them as quickly as distance will permit.

Hence you will perceive, sir, that the President contemplates restitution or compensation in the cases before the 7th of August; and after that date, restitution, if it can be effected, by any means in our power: and that it will be important that you should substantiate the fact, that such prizes are in our ports or waters.

Your list of the privateers illicitly armed in our ports, is, I believe, correct.

With respect to losses by detention, waste, or spoliation, sustained by vessels taken as before-mentioned, between the dates of June 5th and August 7th, it is proposed, as a provisional measure, that the collector of the customs of the district, and the British consul, or any other person you please, shall appoint persons to establish the value of the vessel and cargo at the time of her capture, and of her arrival in the port into which she is brought, according to their value in that port. If this shall be agreeable to you, and you will be pleased to signify it to me, with the names of the prizes understood to be of this description, instructions will be given accordingly to the collectors of the customs where the respective vessels are.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(Signed)

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

ADDITIONAL ARTICLE.

IT is further agreed between the said contracting parties, that the operation of so much of the twelfth article of the said treaty as respects the trade which his said Majesty thereby consents may be carried on between the United States and his islands in the West Indies, in the manner and on the terms and conditions specified, shall be suspended.

WE therefore, by virtue of these presents, do approve and ratify the said treaty, together with the said additional article, as the same are respectively set forth in this instrument of ratification; promising and engaging Our Royal Word, that We will faithfully and religiously perform all and singular the things agreed upon in this treaty, and that We will not suffer the same to be violated by any one, as far as lies in Our Power. For the greater testimony and validity whereof, We have caused Our Great Seal to be affixed to these presents, which We have signed with Our Royal Hand.

Given at Our Court at St. James's, the twenty-eight day of October, One thousand seven hundred and ninety five, in the thirty-sixth year of Our Reign.

G. R.

Ratification

TREATY OF AMITY, &c. BETWEEN HIS BRITANNIC

Ratification of the United States.

GEORGE WASHINGTON, President of the United States of America,

To all and singular to whom these presents shall come, greeting.

WHEREAS a certain Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation between the United States of America and his Britannic Majesty was concluded and signed between their Plenipotentiary the Honourable John Jay, Chief Justice of the United States, and their Envoy Extraordinary to his said Majesty, and the Plenipotentiary of his Britannic Majesty, the Right Honourable William Wyndham, Baron Grenville of Wotton, one of his Majesty's Privy Council, and his Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, at London, on the nineteenth day of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety-four: which treaty is word for word as follows; to wit,

[Here follows the Treaty.]

And whereas the Senate of the United States did, by their resolution on the twenty-fourth day of June, in the year of our Lord 1795, (all the Senators of the United States being then present, and two-thirds thereof concurring) consent to and advise the President of the United States to ratify the Treaty of Amity, Commerce, and Navigation, between his Britannic Majesty and the United States of America, concluded at London the nineteenth day of November, 1794, on condition that there be added to the said Treaty an Article, whereby it shall be agreed to suspend the operation of so much of the twelfth Article as respects the trade which his said Majesty thereby consents may be carried on between the United States and his islands in the West Indies, in the manner, and on the terms and conditions therein specified."

And whereas it will satisfy, and be conformable with the said advice and consent of the Senate if there be added to the said Treaty an Article in the following words, that is to say,

ADDITIONAL ARTICLE.

"It is further agreed between the said contracting parties, that the operation of so much of the twelfth Article of the said Treaty as respects the trade which his said Majesty thereby consents may be carried on between the United States and his islands in the West Indies, in the manner and on the terms and conditions therein specified, shall be suspended."

Therefore, I George Washington, President of the United States of America, having seen and considered the Treaty and additional Article aforesaid, and the advice and consent of the Senate of the United States of America, by these presents, ratify, accept and confirm the said Treaty and the said additional Article, as the same are herin before set forth.

And I do moreover hereby declare, that the said Treaty and the said additional Article form together one instrument, and are a treaty between the United States of America and his Britannic Majesty, made by the President of the United States, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate thereof.

For the greater testimony and validity of all which, I have caused the Great Seal of the United States of America to be affixed to these presents, and have signed the same with my hand.

MAJESTY AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. 77

Given at the City of Philadelphia, the Fourteenth Day of August, in the Year One thousand seven hundred and ninety five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the twentieth.

(Signed)

GEO. WASHINGTON.

By the President of the United States of America,

(Signed)

EDM. RANDOLPH,

Secretary of State for the United States of America.

His Majesty's Full Power.

GEORGE R.

GEORGE the Third, by the Grace of God, King of Great Britain, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, Duke of Brunswick and Lunenburg, Arch-Treasurer and Prince Elector of the Holy Roman Empire, &c. To all to whom these presents shall come, greeting. Whereas, for the perfecting, confirming and rendering perpetual the peace, friendship and good understanding between Us and Our good friends the United States of America, for settling and terminating all subsisting differences and disputes, from whatever cause the same may have arisen between Us and the said United States, or between Our subjects and the people or inhabitants of the said States, for removing the grounds of future dissensions, and for promoting and extending the mutual intercourse of trade and commerce between Our dominions and the territories of the said United States, We have thought proper to invest some fit person with full powers on Our part to confer, treat and conclude with John Jay, Esquire, the Envoy Extraordinary of the said United States to Our Court, now residing at Our said Court, and duly authorized in that behalf on the part of the said United States. Now know ye, that We, reposing especial trust and confidence in the wisdom, loyalty, diligence and circumspection of Our Right Trusty and Well-beloved Counsellor William Wyndham, Baron Grenville of Weston, and Our Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, have nominated, constituted and appointed, and by these presents do nominate, constitute and appoint him Our true, certain and undoubted Commissioner, Procurator and Plenipotentiary: giving and granting to him all and full manner of faculty, power and authority, together with general as well as special orders (so as the general do not derogate from the special, nor on the contrary for Us and in Our name to meet, confer, treat and conclude with the said Minister, furnished with sufficient powers on the part of Our said good friends the United States of America, of and concerning all such matters and things as may be requisite and necessary for accomplishing and completing the several ends and purposes herein before mentioned; and also for Us and in Our name to sign such treaty or treaties, convention or conventions, or other instruments whatsoever, as may be agreed upon in the premises, and mutually to deliver and receive the same in exchange; and to do and perform all such other acts, matters and things as may be any ways proper and conducive to the purposes above mentioned, in full and ample form and manner, and with the like validity and effect as if We Ourself, if We were present, could do and perform the same; engaging and promising on Our Royal Word that We will accept, ratify and confirm, in the most effectual manner, all such acts, matters and things as shall be so transacted and concluded by Our aforesaid Commissioner, Procurator and Plenipotentiary, and that We will never suffer any person to violate the same, in the whole or in part, or to act contrary thereto.

THE TREATY OF AMITY, &c. BETWEEN HIS BRITANNIC

In testimony and confirmation of all which, We have caused Our Great Seal of Great Britain to be affixed to these presents, signed with Our Royal Hand.

Given at our Palace at St. James's, the Seventeenth Day of November, 'n the Year of our Lord One thousand seven hundred and ninety-four, and in the Thirty-fifth Year of Our Reign.

Full Power of the United States.

GEORGE WASHINGTON, President of the United States of America,

To all and singular whom these presents shall concern, greeting.

KNOW ye, that, for the purpose of confirming between the United States of America and his Britannic Majesty perfect harmony and a good correspondence, and of removing all grounds of dissatisfaction, and from a special trust and confidence in the integrity, prudence and abilities of John Jay, Chief Justice of the United States, I have nominated, and, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate appointed the said John Jay Envoy Extraordinary of the United States to his Britannic Majesty, hereby giving and granting to him full and all manner of power and authority, as also a general and special command, at the Court of his said Majesty, for and in the name of the United States, to meet and confer with the Ministers, Commissioners or Deputies of his said Majesty, being furnished with sufficient authority, whether singly and separately, or collectively and jointly, and with them to agree, treat, consult and negotiate of and concerning all matters and causes of difference subsisting between the United States and his said Majesty, whether the same respect the inexecution or infraction of the Armistice declaring a cessation of hostilities between the United States of America and his Britannic Majesty, at Versailles, on the 20th day of January, 1783, or the definitive Treaty of Peace made between the United States and his said Majesty on the 3d day of September 1783, or the instructions of his said Majesty to his ships of war and privateers, of whatsoever date, but especially on the 8th of June, 1793, the 6th of November, 1793, and the 8th of January 1794, or restitution or compensation, in the cases of capture or seizure made of the property of the citizens of the United States by the said ships of war and privateers, or retribution for the injuries received therefrom by any citizen of the United States, and also of and concerning the general commerce between the United States and the kingdoms and dominions of his Britannic Majesty, wheresoever they may be; and to conclude and ratify any treaty or treaties, convention or conventions, touching the premises, transferrable to the President of the United States of America for his final signature, and with the advice and consent of the Senate of the United States.

In testimony whereof, I have caused the Seal of the United States to be hereunto affixed. Given under my hand, at the City of Philadelphia, this Sixth day of May, One thousand seven hundred and ninety-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the Eighteenth.

(Signed)

GEO. WASHINGTON.

By the President of the United States of America,

(Signed)

EDM. RANDOLPH,
Secretary of State.

TREATY

T R E A T Y

Of Defensive Alliance between His Britannic Majesty and the Emperors of Russia. Signed at St. Petersburg, the 18th of February, 1795.

Au Nom de la Très Sainte Trinité.

SA Majesté Britannique et sa Majesté l'Impératrice de toutes les Russies, animées d'un désir également sincère de resserrer de plus en plus les liens d'amitié et de bonne intelligence qui subsistent si heureusement entre elles et leurs Monarchies respectives, ont pensé que rien ne contribueroit plus efficacement à ce but salutaire que la conclusion d'un Traité d'Alliance Défensive; dont elles s'occupoient incessamment, et qui auroit pour base les stipulations de traités pareils qui ont déjà antérieurement été arrêtés, et ont fait l'objet de l'union la plus étroite, entre les deux empires. Pour cet effet, leurs dites Majestés ont nommés pour leurs Plenipotentiaires, savoir, sa Majesté Britannique le Sieur Charles Whitworth, son Envoyé Extraordinaire et Ministre Plenipotentiaire auprès de sa Majesté Impériale de toutes les Russies, Chevalier de l'Ordre du Bain; et sa Majesté Impériale de toutes les Russies le Sieur Jean Comte d'Osterman, son Vice Chancelier, Conseiller Privé actuel, Sénateur, et Chevalier des Ordres de St. André, de St. Alexandre Newsky, Grand Croix de celui de St. Vladimir de la première Classe de St. Anne; le Sieur Alexandre Comte de Bezborodko, son Grand Maître de la Cour, Conseiller Privé actuel, Directeur Général des Postes, et Chevalier des Ordres de St. André, de St. Alexandre Newsky, et Grand Croix de celui de St. Vladimir de la première Classe; et le Sieur Arcadi de Morcoff, Conseiller Privé, Membre du Collège des Affaires Etrangères Chevalier de l'Ordre de St. Alexandre Newsky, et Grand Croix de celui de St. Vladimir de la première Classe: Lesquels, après avoir comparé entr'eux leurs Plein-pouvoirs, trouvés en bonne et due forme, sont convenus des articles suivans.

In the Name of the Most Holy Trinity.

HIS Britannic Majesty, and her Majesty the Emperors of all the Russias, animated with a desire equally sincere to strengthen more and more the ties of friendship and good understanding which so happily subsist between them and their respective Monarchies, have thought that nothing would more effectually contribute to this salutary end than the conclusion of a Treaty of Defensive Alliance, concerning which they should occupy themselves forthwith, and which should have for basis the stipulations of similar treaties which have already been heretofore concluded, and have made the objects of the most intimate union between the two empires. For this purpose their said Majesties have named for their Plenipotentiaries, that is to say, his Britannick Majesty, the Sieur Charles Whitworth, his Envoy Extraordinary, and Minister Plenipotentiary to her Imperial Majesty of all the Russias, Knight of the Order of the Bath; and her Imperial Majesty of all the Russias, the Sieur John Count Osterman, her Vice-Chancellor, actual Privy Councillor, Senator and Knight of the Orders of St. Andrew, of St. Alexander Newsky, Great Cross of that of St. Vladimir of the first Class of St. Anne; the Sieur Alexander Count of Bezborodko, her Great Master of the Court, actual Privy Councillor, Director General of the Posts, and Knight of the Orders of St. Andrew, of St. Alexander Newsky, and Great Cross of that of St. Vladimir of the first Class; and the Sieur Arcadi de Morcoff, Privy Councillor, Member of the College of Foreign Affairs, Knight of the Order of St. Alexander Newsky, and Great Cross of that of St. Vladimir of the first Class: Who, after having mutually exchanged their full powers, found to be in good and due form, have agreed upon the following articles.

ARTICLE I.

Il y aura une amitié constante entre sa Majesté Britannique et sa Majesté l'Impératrice de toutes les Russies, leurs héritiers et successeurs, et en conséquence de cette union intime, les Hautes Parties contractantes n'auront rien plus fortement à cœur que d'avancer, par tous les moyens possibles, leurs intérêts mutuels, de détourner l'un de l'autre tout ce qui pourroit lui causer quelque tort, dommage ou préjudice, et de se maintenir réciproquement dans la tranquille possession de leurs états, droits, commerce et prerogatives quelconques en se garantissant, pour cet effet réciproquement tous leurs pays, états et possessions, tels qu'elles les possèdent actuellement, ainsi que ceux qu'elles pourroient acquies par des traités.

ARTICLE II.

Si malgré, les efforts qu'elles emploieront d'un commun accord pour atteindre ce but, il arrivoit cependant que l'une d'entre elles fût attaquée par mer ou par terre, l'autre lui prêterait d'abord, et dès que la réquisition lui en aura été faite, les secours stipulés par les articles subséquens de ce traité.

ARTICLE III.

Sa Majesté Britannique et sa Majesté Impériale de toutes les Russies déclarent toutefois, qu'en contractant la présente alliance, elles n'entendent nullement offenser par là ni faire du tort à qui que ce soit; mais que leur unique intention est de pourvoir par ces engagements à leur avantage et sûreté réciproque, ainsi qu'au rétablissement de la paix, et au maintien de la tranquillité générale de l'Europe, et surtout de celle du Nord.

ARTICLE IV.

Puisque les deux Hautes Parties contractantes professent le même vœu de se rendre leurs secours mutuels aussi avantageux que possible, et que les forces naturelles de la Russie consistent en troupes de terre, tandis que la Grande-Bretagne peut principalement fournir des secours de guerre, on est convenu que si la Majesté Britannique étoit at-

ARTICLE I.

There shall be a sincere and constant friendship between his Britannic Majesty and her Majesty the Empress of all the Russias, their heirs and successors, and, in consequence of this intimate union, the high contracting parties shall have nothing more strongly at heart than to promote by all possible means their mutual interests, to avert from each other whatever might cause them any injury, damage, or prejudice, and to maintain themselves reciprocally in the undisturbed possession of their dominions, rights, commerce, and prerogatives whatsoever, by guaranteeing reciprocally for this purpose all their territories, dominions, and possessions, as well such as they actually possess, as those which they may acquire by treaty.

ARTICLE II.

If, notwithstanding the efforts which they shall employ by common consent in order to obtain this end, it should nevertheless happen that one of them should be attacked by sea or land, the other shall furnish him, immediately on the requisition being made, the succours stipulated by the following articles of this treaty.

ARTICLE III.

His Britannic Majesty and her Imperial Majesty of all the Russias declare, however, that in contracting the present alliance, their intention is by no means to give offence thereby, or to injure any one, but that their sole intention is to provide by these engagements for their reciprocal advantage and security, as well as for the re-establishment of peace, and for the maintenance of the general tranquillity of Europe, and above all that of the North.

ARTICLE IV.

As the two high contracting parties profess the same desire to render to each other their mutual succours as advantageous as possible, and as the natural force of Russia consists in land troops, whilst Great Britain can principally furnish ships of war, it is agreed upon, that if his Britannic Majesty should be attacked or disturbed by any other power,

façée ou troublée par quelque autre puissance, et en quelque manière que ce soit, dans la possession de ses états et provinces, de sorte qu'elle jugeât nécessaire de requérir l'assistance de son allié, sa Majesté Imperiale de toutes les Russies lui enverra d'abord dix mille hommes d'infanterie et deux mille de cavalerie. Si, de l'autre côté, sa Majesté Imperiale de toutes les Russies se trouvoit attaquée ou troublée par quelque autre puissance, et en quelque manière que ce soit, dans la possession de ses états et provinces, de sorte qu'elle jugeât nécessaire de requérir l'assistance de son allié, sa Majesté Britannique lui enverra d'abord une escadre de douze vaisseaux de guerre, et de ligne, portant sept cens huit canons, selon la liste suivante : deux vaisseaux de septante quatre canons, faisant ensemble cent quarante huit canons, et neuf cens soixante hommes d'équipage ; six vaisseaux de soixante canons, faisant trois cens soixante canons, deux mille quatre cens hommes d'équipage ; quatre vaisseaux de cinquante canons, faisant deux cens canons, mille deux cens hommes d'équipage ; le tout douze vaisseaux, sept cens huit canons, et quatre mille cinq cens soixante hommes d'équipage. Cette escadre sera dûement équipée et armée en guerre. Lesquels secours seront respectivement envoyés aux endroits qui seront désignés par la partie requérante, et demeureront à la libre disposition de celle-ci pendant tout le tems que les hostilités dureront.

ARTICLE V.

Mais si la nature de l'attaque étoit telle que la partie attaquée ne trouvât pas de son intérêt de demander les secours effectifs, tels qu'ils ont été stipulés dans l'article précédent, alors les deux hautes parties contractantes ont résolu de convertir le dit secours dans un subside en argent : C'est-à-dire, si la Majesté Britannique venoit à être attaquée, et préféreroit des secours en argent, la Majesté Imperiale de toutes les Russies, après la requition préalable faite, lui payera la somme de cinq cens mille roubles par an, pendant tout le tems des hostilités, pour l'aider à supporter les frais de la guerre ; et si la Majesté Imperiale de toutes les Russies venoit à être attaquée, et préféreroit des secours en argent, la Majesté Britannique lui

power, and in whatever manner it might be, in the possession of his dominions and provinces, so that he should think it necessary to require the assistance of his ally, her Imperial Majesty of all the Russias shall send him immediately ten thousand infantry and two thousand horse. If, on the other hand, her Imperial Majesty of all the Russias should find herself attacked or disturbed by any other power, and in whatever manner it may be, in the possession of her dominions and provinces, so that she should think it necessary to require the assistance of her ally, his Britannic Majesty shall send her forthwith a Squadron of twelve ships of war and of the line, carrying seven hundred and eight guns, according to the following list : Two ships of seventy-four guns making together one hundred and forty-eight guns, and the crews nine hundred and sixty men ; six ships of sixty guns, making three hundred and sixty guns, and the crews two thousand four hundred men ; four ships of fifty guns, making two hundred guns, and the crews twelve hundred men. In the whole twelve ships, seven hundred and eight guns and the crews four thousand five hundred and sixty men. This Squadron shall be properly equipped and armed for war. These succours shall be respectively sent to the places which shall be specified by the requiring party, and shall remain at his free disposal, as long as hostilities shall last.

ARTICLE V.

But if the nature of the attack were such, as that the party attacked should not find it to his interest to demand the effective succours, such as they have been stipulated for in the preceding article, in that case the two high contracting powers have resolved to change the said succour into a pecuniary subsidy ; that is to say, if his Britannic Majesty should be attacked, and should prefer pecuniary succours, her Imperial Majesty of all the Russias, after the requition having been previously made, shall pay to him the sum of five hundred thousand roubles yearly, during the continuance of hostilities, to assist him to support the expenses of the war ; and if her Imperial Majesty of all the Russias should be attacked, and should

fournira la même somme par an, aussi longtems que les hostilités dureront.

prefer pecuniary succours, his Britannick Majesty shall furnish her with the same sum yearly, as long as hostilities shall last.

ARTICLE VI.

Si la partie requise, après avoir prêté le secours stipulé par le quatrième article de ce traité, étoit attaquée elle-même, de sorte qu'elle fût mise par-là dans la nécessité de rappeler ses troupes pour sa propre sûreté, il lui sera libre de le faire, après en avoir averti deux mois auparavant la partie requérante. Pareillement, si la partie requise étoit elle-même en guerre, dans le tems de la réquisition; de sorte qu'elle fût obligée de retenir auprès d'elle pour sa propre sûreté et défense les forces qu'elle avoit fournies à son allié en vertu de ce traité; en ce cas la partie requise sera dispensée de fournir les dits secours pendant tout le tems que cette nécessité durera.

ARTICLE VI.

If the party required, after having furnished the succour stipulated in the fourth article of this treaty, should be himself attacked, so as to put him thereby under the necessity of recalling his troops for his own safety he shall be at liberty to do so after having informed the requiring party thereof two months beforehand. In like manner, if the party required were himself at war at the time of the requisition, so that he should be obliged to retain near himself, for his own proper security and defence, the forces which he is bound to furnish to his ally in virtue of this treaty; in such case the party required shall be dispensed from furnishing the said succour so long as the said necessity shall last.

ARTICLE VII.

Les troupes auxiliaires de la Russie seront pourvues d'artillerie de campagne, de munitions de guerre, et de tout ce dont elles ont besoin à proportion de leur nombre. Elles seront payées et recrutées annuellement par la cour requise. Quant aux rations et portions ordinaires, en vivres et en fourrages, ainsi qu'aux quartiers, ils leur seront donnés, par la cour requérante, et tout cela sur le pied qu'elle entretient ou entretiendra ses propres troupes en campagne et dans les quartiers.

ARTICLE VII.

The Russian auxiliary troops shall be provided with field artillery, ammunition, and every thing of which they may stand in need in proportion to their number. They shall be paid and recruited annually by the requiring court. With regard to the ordinary rations and portions of provisions and forage, as well as quarters, they shall be furnished to them by the requiring court, the whole on the footing upon which his own troops are or shall be maintained in the field or in quarters.

ARTICLE VIII.

En cas que les dites troupes auxiliaires de la Russie demandées par sa Majesté Britannique fussent obligées de marcher par terre, et de traverser les états de quelques autres puissances, sa Majesté Britannique s'emploiera de concert avec sa Majesté Impériale de toutes les Russies, à leur procurer un libre passage, et leur fournira en route les vivres et les fourrages nécessaires, de la manière que cela se trouve stipulé dans l'article précédent; et lorsqu'elles auront à passer la mer, sa Majesté Britannique prendra sur elle, ou de les transporter sur ses propres vaisseaux, ou bien de fournir les frais de ce trans-

ARTICLE VIII.

In case the said Russian auxiliary troops required by his Britannic Majesty should be obliged to march by land, and to traverse the dominions of any other powers, his Britannic Majesty shall use his endeavours jointly with her Imperial Majesty of all the Russias to obtain for them a free passage, and shall supply them on their march with the necessary provisions and forage, in the manner stipulated in the preceding article; and when they shall have to cross the sea, his Britannic Majesty shall take upon himself either to transport them in his own ships, or to defray the expences of their passage; the

port; ce qui doit s'entendre aussi des recrues que sa Majesté Impériale sera obligée d'envoyer à ses troupes, aussi bien que du retour de ces-ci en Russie lorsqu'elles seront ou renvoyées par sa Majesté Britannique ou rappelées par sa Majesté Impériale de toutes les Russies pour sa propre défense, selon l'Article VI. de ce Traité. Il est stipulé de plus que dans le cas ou de rappel ou de renvoi des dites troupes, un convoi suffisant de vaisseaux de guerre les escortera pour leur sûreté.

ARTICLE IX.

L'officier commandant, soit des troupes auxiliaires de sa Majesté Impériale de toutes les Russies, soit de l'escadre que sa Majesté Britannique doit fournir à la Russie, gardera le commandement qui lui a été confié; mais le commandement général appartiendra incontestablement à celui que la partie réquérante aura nommé pour cela, sous la restriction pourtant qu'on n'entreprendra rien d'important qui ne soit auparavant réglé et déterminé dans un conseil de guerre, en présence du général et des officiers commandans de la partie requise.

ARTICLE X.

Et pour prévenir toute contestation sur le rang, la partie réquérante sera connoître à tems le chef auquel elle donnera le commandement général soit de la flotte soit des troupes de terre, afin que la partie requise puisse régler en conséquence le rang de celui qui aura à commander les troupes auxiliaires ou vaisseaux.

ARTICLE XI.

De plus, ces forces auxiliaires auront leurs propres aumôniers et l'exercice entièrement libre de leur religion, et ne seront jugés dans tout ce qui a rapport au service militaire que selon les loix et les articles de guerre de leur propre souverain. Il sera permis de même au général ainsi qu'au reste des forces auxiliaires, d'entretenir une correspondance libre avec leur patrie, soit par lettre, soit par des exprès.

the same is also to be understood as well with regard to the recruits which her Imperial Majesty will be obliged to send to her troop, as respecting their return to Russia whenever they shall either be sent back by his Britannic Majesty or recalled by her Imperial Majesty of all the Russias for her own defence, according to Article VI. of this treaty. It is further agreed upon, that, in case of recalling or sending back the said troops, an adequate convoy of ships of war shall escort them for their security.

ARTICLE IX.

The commanding officer, whether of the auxiliary troops of her Imperial Majesty of all the Russias, or of the squadron which his Britannic Majesty is to furnish Russia with, shall keep the command which has been intrusted to him; but the command in chief shall belong most certainly to him whom the requiring party shall appoint for that purpose; under the restriction however that nothing of importance shall be undertaken that shall not have been before-hand regulated and determined upon in a council of war, in the presence of the general and commanding officers of the party required.

ARTICLE X.

And, in order to prevent all disputes about rank, the requiring party shall give due notice of the officer to whom he will give the command in chief, whether of a fleet or of land forces; to the end that the party required may regulate in consequence the rank of him who shall have to command the auxiliary troops or ships.

ARTICLE XI.

Moreover, these auxiliary forces shall have their own chaplains, and the entirely free exercise of their religion, and shall not be judged in whatever respects to military service, otherwise than according to the laws and articles of war of their own sovereign. It shall likewise be permitted for the general and the rest of the auxiliary forces to keep up a free correspondence with their country, as well by letters as express.

ARTICLE XII.

Les forces auxiliaires de part et d'autre devront demeurer ensemble autant que possible; et pour éviter qu'elles ne soient assujetties à plus de fatigues que les autres, et afin qu'il y ait dans toutes les expéditions et opérations une égalité parfaite, le général en chef sera tenu d'observer dans toutes les occasions une juste proportion selon la force de toute la flotte ou armée.

ARTICLE XIII.

L'escadre que sa Majesté Britannique doit fournir en vertu de cette alliance, sera reçue dans tous les ports de sa Majesté Impériale de toutes les Russies, où elle éprouvera le traitement le plus amical, et sera pourvue de tout ce dont elle pourra avoir besoin, en payant tout au même prix que les vaisseaux de sa Majesté Impériale de toutes les Russies; et il sera permis à la dite escadre de retourner chaque année dans les ports de la Grande Bretagne aussitôt que la saison ne permettra plus de tenir la mer; mais il est formellement et dès à présent stipulé que cette escadre reviendra chaque année dans la mer Baltique vers le commencement du mois de May, pour ne la quitter qu'au chef qu'au mois d'Octobre, et cela autant de fois que le cas du traité l'exigera.

ARTICLE XIV.

La partie réquérante, en demandant les secours stipulés par ce traité, indiquera en même tems à la partie réquise le lieu, où elle désirera qu'il se rende d'abord; et il sera libre à la dite partie réquérante de se servir du secours mentionné, pendant tout le tems qu'il lui sera continué, de la manière et aux endroits qu'elle jugera le plus convenable pour son service contre l'agresseur.

ARTICLE XV.

Le cas de ce traité d'alliance ne sera point applicable aux guerres qui pourront survenir entre sa Majesté Impériale de toutes les Russies et les puissances et peuples d'Asie, pour lesquelles sa Majesté Britannique sera dispensée de

ARTICLE XII.

The auxiliary forces on both sides shall be kept together as much as possible; and in order to avoid their being subjected to greater fatigue than the others, and to the end that there may be in every expedition and operation a perfect equality, the commander in chief shall be bound to observe on every occasion a just proportion, according to the force of the whole fleet or army.

ARTICLE XIII.

The Squadron which his Britannic Majesty is to furnish by virtue of this alliance, shall be admitted into all the ports of her Imperial Majesty of all the Russias, where it shall experience the most amicable treatment, and shall be provided with every thing which it may stand in need of, on paying the same price as the ships of her Imperial Majesty of all the Russias; and the said Squadron shall be allowed to return every year to the ports of Great-Britain, as soon as the season will no longer permit it to keep the sea; but it is formally and from this time forward stipulated, that this Squadron shall return every year to the Baltic Sea about the beginning of the month of May, not to quit it again before the month of October, and that as often as the exigency of the Treaty shall require it.

ARTICLE XIV.

The requiring party, in claiming the succours stipulated by this Treaty, shall point out at the same time to the required party, the place where he shall wish that it may, in the first instance, repair; and the said requiring party shall be at liberty to make use of the said succour during the whole time it shall be continued to him, in such manner and at such places as he shall judge to be most suitable for his service against the aggressor.

ARTICLE XV.

The conditions of this Treaty of Alliance shall not be applicable to the wars which may arise between her Imperial Majesty of all the Russias and the powers and people of Asia, respecting whom his Britannic Majesty shall

prêter les secours stipulés par le présent traité; excepté le cas d'une attaque faite par une puissance Européenne quelconque contre les droits et possessions de sa Majesté Impériale en quelque partie du monde que ce soit. Comme aussi de l'autre côté sa Majesté Impériale de toutes les Russies ne sera point tenue de fournir les secours stipulés par ce même traité dans quelque cas que ce soit, excepté d'une attaque fait par une puissance Européenne quelconque contre les droits et possessions de sa Majesté Britannique en quelque partie du monde que ce soit.

ARTICLE XVI.

Il a été également convenu qu'en égard à la grande distance des lieux, les troupes que sa Majesté Impériale des routes les Russies aura à fournir en vertu de cette alliance pour la défense de sa Majesté Britannique ne seront pas envoyées en Espagne, en Portugal, ni en Italie, et encore moins hors de l'Europe.

ARTICLE XVII.

Si les secours stipulés dans l'Article IV. de ce Traité ne suffisoient pas, alors les parties contractantes se réservent de convenir encore entr'elles des secours ultérieurs qu'elles devront se donner.

ARTICLE XVIII.

La partie réquérante ne fera ni paix ni trêve avec l'ennemi commun, sans y comprendre la partie requise, afin que celle-ci ne puisse souffrir aucun dommage en haine des secours qu'elle aura prêtés à son Allié.

ARTICLE XIX.

La présente alliance défensive ne dérogera en rien aux traités et alliances que les hautes parties contractantes pourront avoir avec d'autres puissances, en tant que les dits traités ne seront point contraires à celui-ci ni à l'amitié à la bonne intelligence qu'elles sont résolues de conserver constamment entr'elles.

be dispensed with from furnishing the succours stipulated by the present Treaty; excepting in the case of an attack made by any European power against the rights and possessions of her Imperial Majesty, in whatever part of the world it may be. As also on the other hand her Imperial Majesty of all the Russias shall not be bound to furnish the succours stipulated by this same Treaty in any case whatever, excepting that of an attack made by any European power against the rights and possessions of his Britannic Majesty in whatever part of the world it may be.

ARTICLE XVI.

It has been in like manner agreed upon, that considering the great distance of places the troops which her Imperial Majesty of all the Russias will have to furnish by virtue of this alliance, for the defence of his Britannic Majesty, shall not be sent to Spain, Portugal or Italy, and still less out of Europe.

ARTICLE XVII.

If the succours stipulated in the Fourth Article of this Treaty should not be sufficient, in that case the contracting parties reserve to themselves to make a further provision between themselves with respect to the additional succours which they should give to each other.

ARTICLE XVIII.

The requiring party shall make neither peace nor truce with the common enemy, without including the required party, to the end that the latter may not suffer any injury in consequence of the succours he shall have given to his Ally.

ARTICLE XIX.

The present Defensive Alliance shall in no way derogate from the Treaties and Alliances which the high contracting parties may have with other powers, inasmuch as the said Treaties shall not be contrary to this, nor to the friendship and good understanding which they are resolved constantly to keep up between them.

RUSSIAN TREATY.

ARTICLE XX.

Si quelque autre puissance vouloit accéder à la présente alliance, leurs dites Majestés s'entendent se concerter entr'elles sur l'admission de cette puissance.

ARTICLE XXI.

Les deux hautes parties contractantes desirant, mutuellement et avec empressement d'affermir et de consolider autant que possible l'amitié et l'union déjà heureusement existantes entr'elles, et de protéger et d'étendre le commerce entre leurs sujets respectifs, s'engagent à procéder, sans délai, à la formation d'un arrangement définitif de commerce.

ARTICLE XXII.

Les circonstances pouvant amener la nécessité de faire quelques changemens dans les stipulations du présent Traité, les hautes parties contractantes ont trouvé bon d'en fixer le terme à huit ans, à compter du jour de l'échange des ratifications; mais avant l'expiration de la huitième année il sera renouvelé selon les circonstances d'alors.

ARTICLE XXIII.

Le présent Traité d'Alliance sera ratifié, et les ratifications échangées ici, dans l'espace de deux mois, ou plutôt si faire se pourra:

En foi de quoi les susdits Ministres Plenipotentiaires des deux côtés ont signé le présent Traité, et y ont apposé le cachet de leurs armes.

Fait à St. Peterbourg, le Sept-Dixhuit Février, Mil Sept Cens Quatre ving-quinze.

(L. S.) CHARLES WHITWORTH.

ARTICLE XX.

If any other power would accede to this present Alliance, their said Majesties have agreed to concert together upon the admission of such power.

ARTICLE XXI.

The two high contracting parties, desiring mutually and with eagerness to strengthen and to consolidate as much as possible the friendship and union already happily subsisting between them, and to protect and extend the commerce between their respective subjects, promise to proceed, without delay, to the forming of a definitive arrangement of commerce.

ARTICLE XXII.

As circumstances may make it necessary to make some change in the clauses of the present Treaty, the high contracting parties have thought proper to fix the duration of it to eight years, counting from the day of exchanging the ratifications; but before the expiration of the eighth year, it shall be renewed according to existing circumstances.

ARTICLE XXIII.

The present Treaty of Alliance shall be ratified, and the ratifications exchanged here, in the space of two months, or sooner if it can be done.

In witness whereof the Above-mentioned Ministers Plenipotentiary on both sides have signed the present Treaty, and have thereunto affixed the seal of their arms.

Done at St. Peterburgh, this Seventh-Eighteenth of February, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Ninety-five.

(L. S.) CTE JEAN D'OSTERMAN.

(L. S.) ALEXANDRE CTE DE
BEZBORODKO.

(L. S.) ARCADIE DE MORCOFF.

T R E A T Y

Of Defensive Alliance between His Britannic Majesty and the Emperor of Germany. Signed at Vienna, the 20th of May, 1795.

SA Majesté l'Empereur et Sa Majesté le Roi de la Grande Bretagne, désirant de renouveler et de cimenter les anciens rapports d'amitié et d'intimité entre leurs Couronnes et leurs Etats respectifs, aussi bien que de pourvoir d'une manière solide et permanente à leur sûreté future, et à la tranquillité générale de l'Europe, se sont déterminées, en conséquence de ces vûes salutaires, à procéder à la conclusion d'un nouveau Traité d'Alliance, et elles ont nommé à cet effet, savoir, sa Majesté l'Empereur, son Conseiller intime actuel et Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, Baron de Thugut, Commandeur de l'Ordre de St. Etienne; et sa Majesté le Roi de la Grande Bretagne, le Chevalier Morton Eden, Conseiller Privé de sa Majesté, Chevalier de l'Ordre du Bain, Envoyé Extraordinaire et Ministre Plenipotentiaire de sa Majesté auprès de la Cour de Vienne; lesquels, après s'être communiqués leurs pleinpouvoirs respectifs, sont convenus des Articles suivants.

ARTICLE I.

Il y aura entre sa Majesté Impériale et sa Majesté Britannique, leurs Héritiers et Successeurs, et entre tous les états, provinces et sujets respectifs de leurs dites Majestés, une parfaite et sincère bonne intelligence, amitié et alliance défensive. Leurs hautes parties contractantes apporteront tous leurs soins au maintien de leurs intérêts communs, et emploieront tous les moyens qui seront en leur pouvoir pour se défendre et garantir mutuellement contre toute agression hostile.

ARTICLE II.

Les hautes parties contractantes agiront avec un concert parfait en tout ce qui aura rapport au rétablissement et au maintien de la paix générale; et elles emploieront tous leurs efforts pour pré-

HIS Majesty the Emperor, and his Majesty the King of Great Britain, being desirous to renew and to cement the ancient relations of friendship and intimacy between their Crowns and their respective dominions, as well as to provide, in a solid and permanent manner, for their future safety, and for the general tranquillity of Europe, have determined, in consequence of these salutary views, to proceed to the conclusion of a new Treaty of Alliance; and they have nominated for that purpose, viz. his Majesty the Emperor his actual Privy Councillor and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Baron de Thugut, Commander of the Order of St. Stephen, and his Majesty the King of Great Britain, Sir Morton Eden, one of his Majesty's Privy Councillors, Knight of the Bath, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of his said Majesty at the Court of Vienna: who, after having communicated to each other their respective full powers, have agreed upon the following article.

ARTICLE I.

There shall be between his Imperial Majesty and his Britannic Majesty, their heirs and successors, and between all the respective dominions, provinces and subjects of their said Majesties, a perfect and sincere good understanding, friendship and defensive alliance. The high contracting parties shall use all their endeavours for the maintenance of their common interest, and shall employ all the means in their power to defend and guaranty each other mutually against every hostile aggression.

ARTICLE II.

The high contracting parties shall act in perfect concert in every thing which relates to the re-establishment and to the maintenance of general peace; and they shall employ all their efforts to prevent,

venir, par les voyes de negociation amicale, les attaques dont elles pourront être menacées, soit séparément soit conjointement.

by the means of friendly negotiation, the attacks with which they may be threatened, either separately or conjointly.

ARTICLE III.

Au cas que l'une des deux hautes parties contractantes vint à être attaquée, molestée ou inquiétée dans la possession de ses états, territoires ou villes quelconques, ou dans l'exercice de ses droits, libertés et franchises par tout, et sans aucune exception, l'autre apportera tous ses soins pour secourir son allié sans délai, et de la manière ci-dessus mentionnée.

ARTICLE III.

In case either of the high contracting parties should be attacked, molested or disturbed in the possession of its dominions, territories or cities whatsoever, or in the exercise of its rights, liberties or franchises wheresoever, and without any exception, the other will exert all its endeavours to succour its ally without delay, and in the manner herein after mentioned.

ARTICLE IV.

Leurs Majestés Impériale et Britannique se garantissent réciproquement, et de la manière la plus expresse, tous leurs états, territoires, villes, droits, libertés et franchises quelconques, tels qu'elles les possèdent actuellement, et tels qu'elles les posséderont après la conclusion d'une paix générale, faite de leur commun accord et consentement, en conformité de leurs engagements mutuels à cet égard, dans la Convention du 30me Aout, 1793. Et le cas de cette alliance défensive existera dès le moment, et toutes les fois, que l'une des deux hautes parties contractantes sera troublée, molestée, ou inquiétée dans la jouissance paisible de ses états, territoires, villes, droits, libertés ou franchises quelconques, selon l'état de possession actuel, et selon l'état de possession qui existera à l'époque ci-dessus mentionnée.

ARTICLE IV.

Th Imperial and Britannic Majesties are mutually guarantied to each other, and in the most expresse manner, all their dominions, territories, cities, rights, liberties, and franchises whatsoever, such as they at present possess, and such as they shall possess, at the conclusion of a general peace, made by their common agreement and consent, in conformity to their mutual engagements in that respect in the Convention of the 30th of August 1793. And the case of this defensive alliance shall exist from the moment whenever either of the high contracting parties shall be disturbed, molested or disquieted in the peaceable enjoyment of its dominions, territories, cities, rights, liberties or franchises whatsoever, according to the state of actual possession, and according to the state of possession which shall exist at the above mentioned epoch.

ARTICLE V.

Les secours à fournir réciproquement, en vertu de ce traité, consisteront en vingt mille hommes d'infanterie, et six mille hommes de cavalerie, lesquels seront fournis dans l'espace de deux mois après la requisition faite par la partie attaquée et continueront d'être à sa disposition pendant tout le cours de la guerre dans laquelle elle sera engagée. Ces secours seront payés et maintenus par la puissance requise, par tout où son allié les emploiera; mais la puissance requérante les pourvoira du pain et du fourage nécessaires, sur le même pied que ses propres troupes.

ARTICLE V.

The succours to be mutually furnished, in virtue of this treaty, shall consist in twenty thousand infantry, and six thousand cavalry, which shall be furnished in the space of two months after requisition made by the party attacked, and shall continue to be at its disposition during the whole course of the war in which it shall be engaged. These succours shall be paid and maintained by the power required, wherever its ally shall employ them; but the power requiring shall provide them with the necessary bread and forage upon the same footing with its own troops.

Si la partie réquerante le préfère, elle pourra demander que les secours soient fournis en argent; et dans ce cas, les secours seront comptés sur la pied suivant; c'est à-dire, dix mille florins de Hollande par mois, pour chaque mille hommes d'infanterie, et trente mille florins de Hollande par mois, pour chaque mille homme de cavalerie. Et cet argent sera payé de mois en mois, en parties égales, pour toute l'année.

Si ces secours ne suffisent pas pour la défense de la puissance réquerante, l'autre partie les augmentera selon que le cas l'exigera, et secourra même son allié de toutes ses forces, si les circonstances le rendoient nécessaire.

ARTICLE VI.

Il est convenu, qu'en considération de l'alliance intime, établie par ce Traité entre les deux couronnes, ni l'une ni l'autre des hautes parties contractantes ne permettra, que les vaisseaux ou marchandises appartenants à son allié, ou aux peuples ou sujets de son allié, et qui auront été pris sur mer, ou des vaisseaux de guerre ou corsaires quelconques appartenants à des ennemis ou rebelles, soient amenés dans les ports; ni qu'il y soit armé en aucun cas, ni sous aucun prétexte que ce fût, aucun vaisseau de guerre, ou onsaire pour croiser sur les vaisseaux et propriétés de son allié ou de ses sujets, ni qu'il soit porté par ses sujets, ou sur leurs vaisseaux, aux ennemis de son allié, aucune munition de bouche, ou munition de guerre ou munition navale. Pour ces fins, au'il souvent que la réquisition en sera faite par l'un des alliés, l'autre sera tenu de renouveler des prohibitions expressees ordonnant à toutes personnes de se conformer à cet article, sous peine de punition exemplaire, en outre de la pleine restitution et satisfaction à faire aux parties lésées.

ARTICLE VII.

Si, malgré les prohibitions et peines ci-dessus mentionnées, des vaisseaux ennemis ou rebelles ameneroient dans les ports de l'une des deux hautes parties contractantes des prises faites. L'autre, ou sur ses sujets, et les obligera de quitter les ports dans l'espace de vingt quatre heures après leur arrivée, sous peine de saisie et de confiscation; et les équipages et passagers, ou autres prison-

If the party requiring prefers, it may demand the succours to be furnished in money; and in that case the succours shall be computed at the following rate, that is to say; ten thousand Dutch florins per month for every thousand infantry, and thirty thousand Dutch florins per month for every thousand cavalry. And this money shall be paid monthly, in equal portions, throughout the whole year.

If these succours should not suffice for the defence of the power requiring, the other party shall augment them according as the occasion shall require, and shall even succour it's ally with it's whole force, if the circumstances should render it necessary.

ARTICLE VI.

It is agreed that in consideration of the intimate alliance, established by this Treaty between the two crowns, neither the one nor the other of the high contracting parties shall permit the vessels or merchandize belonging to it's ally, or to the people or subjects of it's ally, and which shall have been taken at sea by any ships of war or privateers whatsoever, belonging to enemies or rebels, to be brought into it's harbours; nor any ship of war or privateer to be therein armed in any case or under any pretext whatsoever, in order to cruise against the ships and property of such ally, or of his subjects; nor that there be conveyed by it's subjects or in their ship, to the enemies of it's ally, any provision, or military or naval stores. For these ends, as often as it shall be required by either of the allies, the other shall be bound to renew express prohibition, ordering all persons to conform themselves to this article, upon pain of exemplary punishment, in addition to the full restitution and satisfaction to be made to the injured parties.

ARTICLE VII.

If, notwithstanding the prohibitions and penalties above-mentioned, any vessel of the enemies or rebels should bring into the ports of either of the high contracting parties a prey taken from the other, or from it's subjects, the former shall oblige them to quit it's ports in the space of twenty-four hours after the arrival, upon pain of seizure and confiscation; and the crews and passen-

niers, sujets de son allié, qui auront été amenés dans les dits ports, seront immédiatement après leur arrivée, mis en pleine liberté, avec leur vaisseau et marchandises, sans aucun délai ou exception. Et si quelque vaisseau que ce fût, après avoir été armé ou équipé, en tout ou en partie, dans les ports de l'un des alliés, seroit employé à faire des prises, ou à commettre des hostilités contre les sujets de l'autre, ce vaisseau, au cas qu'il retournât dans les dits ports, seroit, à la réquisition des parties lésées, saisi et confisqué à leur profit.

Les hautes parties contractantes n'entendent pas que les stipulations de ces deux articles puissent déroger à l'exécution de traités antérieurs actuellement existants avec les autres puissances, sans néanmoins qu'il soit libre aux hautes parties contractantes de former ci après de nouveaux engagements au préjudice des dites stipulations.

ARTICLE VIII.

Leurs Majestés Impériale et Britannique s'engagent à ratifier le présent Traité d'alliance, et les ratifications en seront échangées dans l'espace de six semaines, ou plutôt si faire se pourra.

En foi de quoi, nous soussignés, munis des pleinpouvoirs de leurs Majestés Impériale et Britannique, avons en leurs noms signé le présent traité, et y avons fait apposer le cachet de nos armes.

Fait à Vienne, le vingt. Mai, l'an mil sept cent quatre quinze.

(L. S.) LE BARON DE TRUGUT.

gers, or other prisoners, subjects of it's ally, who shall have been brought into the said ports, shall, immediately after their arrival, be restored to their full liberty, with their ship and merchandize, without any delay or exception. And if any vessel whatsoever, after having been armed or equipped, wholly or partially, in the ports of either of the allies, should be employed in taking prizes, or in committing hostility against the subjects of the other. such vessel, in case of it's returning into the said ports, shall, at the requisition of the injured parties, be seized and confiscated for their benefit.

The high contracting parties do not intend that the stipulations in these two articles should derogate from the execution of anterior treaties actually existing with other powers; the high contracting parties not being, however, at liberty to form new engagements hereafter to the prejudice of the said stipulations.

ARTICLE VIII.

Their Imperial and Britannic Majesties engage to ratify the present treaty of alliance, and the ratifications thereof shall be exchanged in the space of six weeks, or sooner if it can be done.

In witness whereof we, the undersigned, being furnished with the full powers of their Imperial and Britannic Majesties, have signed the present treaty in their names, and have caused the seals of our arms to be affixed thereto.

Done at Vienna, the twentieth day of May, in the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-five.

(L. S.) MORTON EDEN.

Article Séparé.

Si le pied, ordinairement limité, des troupes de terre de la Grande Bretagne ne permettoit point à sa Majesté Britannique de fournir, au terme préfix, le secours en hommes, stipulé dans l'article V. de ce présent traité d'alliance,

Separate Article.

In case the establishment, in general limited, of the land forces of Great Britain, should not permit his Britannic Majesty to furnish, within the term specified, the succour in men stipulated by the Vth article of the present treaty of

et que par conséquent sa Majesté Impériale sût dans le cas de remplacer ce secours par un nombre égal d'autres troupes, qu'elle prendrait à sa solde, la confiance de l'Empereur dans l'amitié et l'équité du Roi de la Grande-Bretagne ne lui laisse aucun doute, que sa Majesté Britannique ne se prête sans difficulté à l'indemnité de la différence, qu'après une juste appréciation d'abord, existera entre les frais de la prise à solde et de l'entretien de ces troupes, et l'évaluation, en florins de Hollande, qui, pour éviter tout longueur des discussions, a été adoptée dans le susdit article V. d'après l'estimation portée dans d'anciens traités.

Cet article séparé faisant partie du traité d'alliance, signé aujourd'hui au nom de leurs Majestés Impériale et Britannique, aura la même force et valeur, que s'il étoit inséré mot à mot dans le dit traité d'alliance.

En foi de quoi, nous soussignés, munis des pleinpouvoirs de leurs Majestés Impériale et Britannique, avons en leurs noms signé le présent Article séparé et y avons fait apposer le cachet de nos armes.

Fait à Vienne, le Vingt Mai, l'An
Mil Sept Cent Quatre Vingt
Quinze.

(L. S.) LE BARON DE THUGUT.

of alliance, and that consequently his Imperial Majesty should be obliged to supply that succour by an equal number of other troops, to be taken into his pay, the confidence which the Emperor reposes in the friendship and equity of the King of Great Britain leaves him no room to doubt but that his Britannic Majesty will readily grant him an indemnification for the difference, which, according to a just valuation at the time, shall exist between the expences of the taking into pay and subsistence of those troops, and the estimate in Dutch florins, which, in order to avoid every delay of discussion, has been adopted in the above-mentioned Vth article, in conformity to the estimate contained in antient treaties.

This separate article, making part of the treaty of alliance, signed this day in the name of their Imperial and Britannic Majesties, shall have the same force and validity as if it were inserted word for word in the said treaty of alliance.

In witness whereof, we the undersigned, being furnished with the full powers of their Imperial and Britannic Majesties, have, in their names, signed the present separate Article, and have caused the seals of our arms to be affixed thereto.

Done at Vienna, the Twentieth of
May, in the Year One Thousand
Seven Hundred and Ninety-five.

(L. S.) MORTON EDEN.

Article Séparé.

Leurs Majestés Impériale et Britannique se concerteront sur l'invitation à faire à sa Majesté Impériale de toutes les Russies, pour former par l'union des trois Cours en conséquence des liaisons étroites qui existent déjà entre elles, un système d'une triple Alliance, propre à établir et à maintenir désormais la paix et la tranquillité générale en Europe.

Separate Article.

Their Imperial and Britannic Majesties shall concert together upon the invitation to be given to her Imperial Majesty of all the Russias, in order to form, by the union of the three Courts, in consequence of the intimate connections which exist already between them, a system of triple Alliance, proper for the re-establishment and maintenance in future of peace and general tranquillity in Europe.

This

Cet Article aura la même force
comme s'il étoit inséré dans le présent
Traité.

En foi de quoi, nous soussignés,
munis des pleinpouvoirs de leurs
Majestés Impériale et Britannique,
avons en leurs noms signé le présent
Article séparé, et y avons fait apposer
le cachet de nos armes.

Fait à Vienne, le Vingt Mai, l'An
Mil Sept Cent Quatre Vingt
Quinze.

(L. S.) LE BARON DE THUGUT.

This Article shall have the same
force as if it were inserted in the present
Treaty.

In witness whereof, we the under-
signed, being furnished with the full
powers of their Imperial and Britannie
Majesties, have in their names, signed
the present separate Article, and have
caused the seals of our arms to be
affixed thereto.

Done at Vienna, the Twentieth of
May, in the Year One Thousand
Seven Hundred and Ninety-five.

(L. S.) MORTON EDEN.

REPORT

[Made upon the 14th Day of June, 1794.]

FROM THE

COMMITTEE, &c.

Ordered to be Re-printed the 9th of November, 1795.

The COMMITTEE appointed to consider of the Methods practised in making Flour from Wheat, the Prices thereof, and how far it may be expedient to put the same again under the Regulations of an Assize; and to report the same, with their Opinions thereupon, to the House; in Obedience to the Order of the House, met on Friday the Third of this Month.

THEY first examined the statute, intituled, "*Assisa Panis et Cervisie*," made in the fifty-first year of the reign of Henry the Third; also the ordinance for bakers, made in the times of Henry the Third, Edward the First, or Edward the Second; they did also examine the allowances heretofore made to the bakers, according to the price of the wheat, by the assize of the fifty-first of Henry the Third; by that in the time of Edward the First; by that made in the twelfth year of the reign of Henry the Seventh; by that made in the thirty-fourth year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and lastly, by the Book of Assize, published by order of council in the year 1638, in which, for the first time, the assize was calculated by the pound avoirdupoise and its parts, as well as by the pound troy.

And your committee do find, That the charge of grinding and dressing the wheat into meal and flour was always included within the assize, while the assize of bread was set according to the price of the wheat.

They next examined the statute, intituled, "An Act to regulate the price and assize of bread," made in the eighth year of the reign of Queen Anne; and they find therein, that the magistrates and others authorized to set an assize on bread, were directed by law, for the first time, in so setting the assize, to have respect to the price of the meal and flour, as well as to that of the grain. Although the assize of the bread, as set in the assize table, is calculated by a price of the bushel of wheat; yet that supposed
pri c

price of the bushel of wheat is a compounded price, as collected by having respect to the meal or flour, as well as to the grain, together with the baker's allowance added thereto. From the time that the assize of the bread was set with respect to the flour, the miller and mealman were no longer included within the charges whereon the assize of bread was calculated; they were from thenceforth at liberty to make what sorts of flour they should please, and to affix thereunto what price they thought proper: whereas, while the assize had respect to the grain only, as from time immemorial it always had, the charges of grinding and dressing were included in the calculation of the several operations of the making of bread from the grain; and those articles do accordingly stand in the said calculations.

They find, from the journals of the house, that at the time of making this alteration, there were petitions presented to the house, by the bakers of London, by those of most of the great towns and cities, and almost from every part of England; setting forth, that the setting the assize in this manner must be either impracticable, or a great oppression to the baker. Several inconveniences did arise in practice; and your committee find, That on the second day of March, in the year 1735, the master and wardens of the company of bakers in the city of London, in behalf of themselves and the rest of the bakers within the bills of mortality, did present a petition to the house, in which they set forth and allege, that the prices of the wheat, from whence the magistrate did set the assize, and the prices of the flour which the baker did use for the making the several sorts of bread by the law directed, did not agree; and that the allowance which the assize made them, was not proportioned to their charges, and the cost of the materials whereof their bread was made.

And your committee find, on the 12th day of the said month, that the committee who were appointed to consider of the said petition did report, "That the petitioners had fully proved the allegations of their petition; and that the most certain and most equal method of ascertaining the price and assize of bread within the Bills of Mortality, with justice to the publick, as well as to the bakers, will be, to fix the same from the price of such flour, whereof each sort of bread is made, making a reasonable allowance to the bakers for every bushel of flour, proportionable to the ancient and customary allowance for every bushel of wheat." This resolution was agreed to by the house, and a Bill was ordered to be brought in, "for the better regulating and ascertaining the price and assize of bread in the city of London, and parts adjacent." A Bill was according to the order brought in, but we do not find that the house did proceed therein.

Here your committee beg leave to observe, that although the remedy, proposed by the resolution of that committee, might have relieved the case of the baker: yet, while the miller or mealman

mealman was thus left at liberty to make what divisions and assortments of flour he should please, and to affix thereunto what price should to him, from reasons of his own; seem mee; the poor were still liable to be aggrieved by a high price or affize of bread, although the wheat was cheap; because, if the miller or mealman should affix a high price upon his flour, disproportionate to the price of wheat, and the magistrate should, in the setting the affize, be confined to look to the price of the flour only, as the resolution proposed, the bread might be rated at a high price, although the wheat did not require such.

Your committee next inquired what the law, intituled, "An Act for the due making of bread, and to regulate the price and affize thereof, and to punish persons who shall adulterate meal flour or bread," passed in the thirty-first year of the reign of George the Second, did intend. This law, they find, supposes, that the whole flour of the wheaten is so divided into two sorts, as that a wheaten bread, and an household bread only, should be made for common sale: that the wheaten loaves were always to be three fourths of the weight of the household loaves of the same price; and that the household prized loaves were always to be three fourths of the price of the wheaten loaves of the same size. This wheaten bread was supposed to be somewhat finer than the wheaten intended by the 8th of Queen Anne, but not so fine as the white bread intended by that Act. The household, also, was thus meant to have been of a better and more nutritious quality than that of Queen Anne; and the bread was prized and affized accordingly as such. The price was thus fixed on the public; but the act, as to the making the bread intended was never carried into execution. We are not able to discover that the flour was ever divided by the miller or mealman, as the law supposed when it fixed the affize; or that any such was ever in the market, bearing such proportions, either its quality or price: On the contrary, the mealman appears to have made it by what divisions and of what assortments he pleased, and to have affixed thereunto, without respect had to any just rule or proportion, any prices he pleased; so that, while the baker, (especially in London and the parts adjacent) was obliged to make his bread of such sorts of flour as he could purchase, or did afterwards himself mix the several sorts as he found convenient, the magistrate, however he might set the affize, could not possibly know what that bread was which he so affized or prized.

Your committee were confirmed in their opinion on this head, by inspecting and examining the registers of the prices of wheat and flour, as kept in the books of the meal weighers of the city of London, from September 1759; (when the act for regulating the affize and price of bread first came into operation) to October 1773. They directed their enquiry in order to ascertain the fact, whether there were, according to the intent and meaning of the said act, in the market, for common use and consumption, two

sorts of flour, suited to the making the two sorts of bread only, as intended by the said act should be made for sale; and whether the prices of such flour (if any such there were) bore any fixed proportion, either to the wheat, the bread, or to each other, so as to suit the prices and affize fixed by that act.

Your committee examined Joseph How, who has been a meal weigher from before that period; and also William Marshall, who has been a meal weigher for the last seven years, to the mode of their collecting the prices of the wheat, and of the flour; to the truth of these registers; and also to the sorts of flour which are usually in the market; and do find, that as to the price of the wheat, they collect it from the sellers market books, and check it by those of the buyers; and return the prices, with the quantities sold, to the chief magistrate; which prices are those registered in the books of their office: That as to the flour, there were in the year 1759, and have been ever since, three sorts always in the market; viz. firsts, seconds, and thirds; but that the meal weighers never take account of the price or sale of any other than the first sort, which is improperly termed household, being said to be intended for making the wheaten bread; and that this is generally returned and registered at one price, notwithstanding the price of the wheat varies very considerably; and this finest sort is what always has been and is chiefly sold in the market for the general consumption.

Your committee next examined Mr. Pardo Allet (a mealman) and it appeared, that of late they usually make up their wheat to a standard of 63 pounds to a bushel, by adding such a quantity over and above the measure of the bushel, as the wheat in measure is beneath that weight; yet we find, that the price of flour *per* sack has varied from the price of the wheat *per* quarter, through all proportions, from one to eleven shillings difference.

Your committee wishing to know whence this variation did arise, and whether the mealmen did of late use a different dressing or assortment. They did not receive any information on that head; they were however afterwards informed by the master of the bakers company, who is a miller, that they now dress the households through a twenty shilling cloth, and the residue through a sixteen shilling cloth for seconds; which your committee apprehend to be a coarser dressing than should be for the wheaten bread intended by the act, especially as it appears from the report of the commissioners of the Victualling-office, dated June 10, 1774, hereunto annexed (B), and hereinafter more particularly referred to, that a dressing through a one-and-twenty shilling cloth, as therein described, is the proper dressing for the whole flour, in order to produce the flour duly suited to the wheaten bread. This miller, the master of the Bakers Company, further informed your committee, that he had, since the passing of the bread act of last session, dressed for the bakers, as usual, households, seconds, and thirds.

Mr.

Mr. Pardo Alet, also of the bakers company, who is a mealman, informed your committee, that he used the wire machine now applied to the dressing of flour, and that he dressed the meal through the different numbers, from No. 58 to No. 62 for households, and the residue for middlings through the different numbers, from No. 46 to No. 56. In order to explain the nature of this evidence, we beg leave to refer to three letters inserted in the Appendix, (E. 1, 2, 3,) from Mr. Miln of Manchester, the patentee maker of wire machines for dressing flour, to Mr. Pelham, Secretary of the Victualling office, dated January the first, February the second, and May the fourth, 1774: also to the manufacturers memorandum of several bolting cloths which are most commonly used, described by their denominations, and by the number of threads, which are in the warp, and in the shoot or woof, in an inch square; which is also inserted in the Appendix (F). Reference had to those, will inform the House what the sorts of dressing are which the evidence above describes, and will confirm (whatever names the several sorts of flour at different times be called by) the evidence which we received from the meal weighers, that the same assortments of the flour, viz: households, seconds, and thirds, are now in the market as have been heretofore, but that the sort which is principally and in the main quantity sold there is the households; which the mode of dressing above described provides for accordingly in the greatest quantity.

Your committee, in order to give the more certain information to the House, as to the variations of the difference between the prices of the flour *per* sack of twenty-eight pounds, and the prices of the wheat *per* quarter, have extracted from the meal weighers books, and stated the relative proportions of these prices between the flour and the wheat of the same time, as they were found to stand in different periods, from September 1759 to October 1773; and they have annexed the same to this Report (D).

The difference of price between the price of the sack of flour and the price of the quarter of wheat, as they stood at the same time, appears to have varied from one shilling to eleven shillings. When it appears that the miller and mealman's charges, for grinding and dressing, have been always at or nearly the same rate *per* quarter; and that the household flour has always been supposed to be of (or nearly so) the same fineness, being intended for the same sort of bread; your committee are unable to account for these deviations of proportion by any just rule of charge and profit.

Upon the whole of this point, your committee are not able to find that any such division was ever made of the whole flour into two sorts only, so as specially suited to make the two sorts of bread only, namely, wheaten and household, as the act of the thirty-first of George the second requires; nor that there were in

the market any sorts, which, either in proportion of quality, quantity, or price, answered this intended supply of such two sorts of bread; nor that any quantity of the whole flour of the wheat, such as is directed by the "Act for the better regulating the assize and the due making of bread," the standard wheat bread should be made of, has been in the market; nor can they find that Mr. Jonathan Rogers, master of the Bakers Company, who is a miller, and does not follow the baking trade, (although at the commencement of the said act the company did, as he informed your committee, by advertisement, recommend it to the trade to comply with the act if they could get the flour) did ever dress any standard wheaten flour, except two sacks for a trial, for Mr. Wyatt, one of the wardens of the company; nor that Mr. Pardo Allet, also a considerable member of the said Bakers Company, who is a mealman, did ever dress more than three sacks, which he informed us he dressed for the baker who took his shop. On the contrary, Your Committee find, that the mealmen go on to dress and prize their flour, without any respect had to the bread directed to be made either by the act of the thirty-first of George the second, or to that of the thirteenth of his present Majesty; by which modes much the greatest portion of the whole flour is constantly thrown into that assortment which is called households, the rest and residue being middlings only, such as is chiefly used for biscuit stuff, as Mr. Pardo Allet informed Your Committee; and which households are prized at a rate which half only of the whole flour should have borne; while the small residue is again divided into further assortments, still more remote from answering the regulations of the laws, as they direct the several sorts of bread to be made.

In order precisely to state this matter to the House, Your Committee next examined the Reports of the Commissioners of the Victualing Office, made to the Commissioners of the Admiralty, and dated May 30th, June 10th and 11th, 1774, and which were referred to this Your Committee. These Reports state the Issue of sundry experiments made by that Board, as to the practicability and proper mode of dressing the flour of wheat, conformable to what the laws for the due making of bread require, and as to the produce of such flour from wheats of various sorts. The facts are so clearly demonstrated by those experiments, and the accounts are so distinctly drawn up, that Your Committee cannot better point their information to the House, than by directing it in a reference to the Reports themselves (A, B, C).

Your Committee, however, beg leave to observe, that the proportion of the average quantity of the whole flour in weight, produced (when dressed through a bolting cloth as therein described, or through a wire machine as therein also described) to the average weight of all sorts together of wheats, from 51lb. per bushel to 61lb. per bushel, is nearly three-fourths parts of the average weight of the bushel: that the proportion of the weight of the flour to the

the weight of the wheat, in wheats under 57lb. per bushel is less than three-fourths; but that in wheats above that weight of 57lb. per bushel, the proportion in flour is four-fifths and upwards.

Your Committee next examined Henry Pelham, Esq. (Secretary to the Victualling Office) as to the truth and exactness of the accounts annexed to the said Reports, and instituted on the experiments made; he acquainted Your Committee, that he had examined the same, and that he found them right: he was then desired to give the Committee such observations as he had made relative to the making of flour and bread; in answer to which, he referred to sundry experiments instituted by him, and made under his direction, which are hereunto annexed (G): he also delivered in a paper of observations and states of accounts on this subject, as what would give to the Committee the best information that he was able to lay before them; this was accordingly read, and is hereunto annexed (H).

Your Committee beg leave to observe, from the accounts stated and referred to in the said Reports and papers, that although the baker cannot afford to make, and has therefore never made, the real wheaten household bread, as intended to be made by the Act of the 31st of George the second, while he is obliged to buy his flour of the mealman, under the assortment and at the prices which the trade in general make and charge; nor the standard wheaten bread as intended by the act of the 13th of his present Majesty: yet that if the baker either buyes his own wheat, or that the grinding and dressing are such, and the price so charged as those acts suppose (which with full and ample allowance to the miller, mealman and baker, they can be) the baker is very fully enabled to make such several sorts of bread as the law requires, and to sell them at such price as the law directs, with a considerable profit over and above the allowance which the law and the magistrate make him, according to the present setting of the assize on bread.—Secondly, That while the mealman can obtain 11. 4s. 8d. on the grinding and dressing of a load or five quarters of wheat, according to the general present mode of the trade, he will never dress or prize his flour otherwise: while the baker, buying his flour of those assortments, and at those prices, is to loose on the household bread of the 31st of George the second, twenty shillings and one penny of the due profit which he ought to have on sixty peck loaves of the same; and while in like manner (if he is to buy his flour as before) he is to lose on the standard wheaten bread of the 13th of his present majesty, one pound and a penny farthing on one hundred and twenty peck loaves, he never will or can make either the one or the other.

Thirdly, That until the mealman is obliged to dress the flour into such sorts as are suited to the sorts of bread which the law intends should be made; that is to say, into the whole flour, as it is described in the act for the better regulating the assize, &c. passed last sessions, for the standard wheaten bread; or by so dividing

viding the whole flour into two sorts only, as shall be suited to the wheaten and household bread, as directed by the Act of the 31st of George the second; and until such whole flour, and such sorts of flour, are sold at prices proportioned to the price of wheat on one hand, and to the prices of bread on the other; all regulations respecting bread must be nugatory; all assize on bread impracticable, or otherwise oppressive to the farmer on one hand, or to the baker on the other; and in the end a grievance to the poor labourer, mechanic, and manufacturer.

Lastly, It appears to Your Committee, from the Reports of the Commissioners of the Victualling Office, that the flour may easily, and by less labour than is used in the modes originally practised, be so divided; and that the whole flour may be made the standard for the regulations of an assize of flour, in proportion to the value of the wheat; and that the sorts arising from the division of this whole flour into two equal moieties, may be assized in proportion thereto, by setting the price of the household (that is to say, that flour which is intended for the household bread) one-eighth less than the standard wheaten, and the wheaten flour one-eighth more than the standard wheaten, and the household flour one-fourth less than the wheaten flour; so as the wheaten and household flour together shall make up the price of the standard wheaten, or whole flour; which regulations will precisely suit the proportions that the law hath prescribed to the assize of the several sorts of bread.

Your Committee next examined Thomas Farrer, Esq. as to the truth of sundry experiments, and of accounts instituted thereon, which had been communicated by him, respecting the quantity of flour, and of bread, produced from different sorts of wheat; and he acquainted the Committee, that the experiments had been made by his direction, and under his own inspection; and that the accounts were right: these experiments and accounts are also annexed to this report (I).

One of the Members of this Committee laid before your Committee, a narrative of the proceedings respecting the carrying the bread Act of last sessions into execution in the county of Devon, and in the city of Exeter; also of sundry experiments made at that time by himself, with two other justices, and others, respecting the making of flour and bread, as more particularly relating to the operation of the provisions of the said act, with his observations thereupon; which we have, for the further and fuller information of the House, annexed to this Report (K), and to which we beg leave to refer.

Dr. Charles Irwin having been desired to analyse flour and bread taken from different parts in London, in order to ascertain, as far as the same could be done, whether there were any adulterations of the flour, or any under mixtures, we found in the common bread of London, and what such were; as also what were the defects; as to him, from the institution of his experiments,

ments, should appear; he attended Your Committee, and delivered in an account of the process of such experiments as he had made, and his reasoning thereupon. As it appears to your committee, that it is of consequence to the public, not only that they should be apprised of any defects which may appear, but also that any prejudices as to the existence of supposed frauds, if such on experiments should be found not to exist, should be removed, we have annexed this the Doctor's account (L), and beg leave to refer to it on this head.

Finally, Your committee came to the following resolutions, viz.
Resolved,

That it appears to this Committee, that until the statute, intituled, "*Affisa Panis, et Cervisie*" made in the fifty-first year of the reign of Henry the third, was repealed, by an act intituled, "an Act to regulate the price and assize of bread," passed in the eighth Year of the reign of Queen Ann, the charge of the grinding and dressing the corn into meal and flour was included in the assize which was set upon bread from the price of wheat.

Resolved,

That it appears to this Committee, that the setting any assize on bread, and the fixing a rate upon the labour, pains, livelihood, and profit of the baker, so long as the miller or mealman is at liberty to make what sorts of flour he shall please, and to affix thereunto what prices he shall in like manner please, for his labour, pains, livelihood, and profit, is either impracticable, or must be injurious to the baker, or a great burthen to the poor labourer, mechanic, and manufacturer.

Resolved,

That it appears to this Committee, that the evils arising from there being no restraint, either with respect to the sorts of flour that are made, or to the prices at which they are sold, may be remedied by setting such an assize upon flour as shall be found just and reasonable, with respect to the average market price of wheat.

Resolved,

That it appears to this Committee, that the whole flour of wheat is in general, as it hath always proved to be, in weight nearly three-fourth parts of the weight of the middling grain.

Resolved,

That it appears to this Committee, that, according to the antient custom of the land, every twentieth grain, or five per centum of the weight of the wheat, is full and sufficient toll for the miller's labour, pains, livelihood, and profit.

Resolved,

That it appears to this Committee, that every miller, if the law does not at present oblige him so to do, should, under certain restrictions, be obliged to grind and dress all such wheat as shall be brought to his mill by any person requiring the same.

Resolved,

Resolved,

That it appears to this Committee, that forty-two pounds avoirdupoise of the whole flour, when sold at the mill, is equal in value to the middling price of a Winchester bushel of middling wheat at the same time.

Resolved,

That it appears to this Committee, that the magistrate, magistrates, and others, who is and are by the laws now in being authorized and empowered to set the assize, and fix the price on bread, shall be authorized and empowered in like manner to set the assize and fix the price of flour.

Resolved,

That it appears to this committee, that when the magistrates, who are by the laws now in being, authorized so to do, shall have prohibited any bread purporting to be of a superior quality, or sold at an higher price than the standard wheaten bread, from being made for sale, they be empowered in like manner to prohibit, if they think proper, any flour purporting to be of a superior quality, and sold at an higher price, than the whole flour of wheat, from being made for sale, or sold, except for the purposes of making such small bread as may then be allowed (by licence, under the hand and seal of such magistrate) for or the purposes of pastry and confectionary.

Resolved,

That it appears to this Committee, that the said magistrates shall, in order to enforce the regulations made respecting the standard wheaten bread, be empowered to order, if they think proper, that no miller or mealman shall use, during the continuance of such their order, any bolting cloth finer than herein described; that is to say, a cloth six feet in length, and six feet seven inches in breadth at the head, and six feet broad at the tail, composed of woollen yarn, and weighing one pound when new, having thirty-two threads to the inch in the warp, and twenty-eight threads to an inch in the shoot, and what is at present known and commonly called a thirteen shilling cloth: nor any finer wire sieve, or machine, than that which consists of forty-two wires to an inch both ways, and the weight of six inches square of which is one ounce and one dram.

APPENDIX A.

Victualing Office, 30th May 1794.

SIR,

IN your letter of the 8th of March last, you were pleased to transmit as a letter from Mr. Cooper, one of the Secretaries of the Admiralty, to the Right honourable the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, inclosing a memorandum from governor Cornwall, requesting that some experiments might be made at this office

office relating to the dressing of meal, and signifying the desire of the Right honourable the Lords Commissioners of his Majesty's Treasury, that experiments might be made accordingly: and the directions of the Right honourable the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty having been signified to us by your said letter, to cause experiments to be made agreeable to the governor's request, and to report to their lordships the result thereof.

We pray leave to acquaint you, for the information of their lordships, that the governor's request consists of the following heads; *viz.*

First, To ascertain, when the whole meal of wheat is intended to be so dressed, as that the whole Flour may be so separated from the bran, or hull, by whatever names they may be called, what that bolting cloth is, which will best and nearest perform that operation.

Secondly, To ascertain, when the said whole flour of the wheat is intended to be so divided, as that one half only, containing the finest parts, may be separated, leaving behind the other half, containing the coarser parts, what bolting cloth will best and nearest perform that operation.

Thirdly, that two wire machines might be ordered to be made, which would perform the said operations.

Fourthly, That in ascertaining the bolting cloths, the weight of them be marked, when new, either by the yard square, or the price of given dimensions, and what number of threads are contained in an inch square, both in warp and shute.

Fifthly, That the wire of which the bolting machines shall be made, be described, and how many wires they are both ways, in an inch square, as fixed and numbered by the maker.

Sixthly, That in making the said experiments of separating the whole flour from the hull, the enquiry be instituted on wheats of all weights separately, both of new and old wheats, and upon such a mixture jointly, as might form an average for the whole; marking the weight of the wheat, the waste in grinding and dressing, and the weight of the whole flour; and the weight of the bran and the hull, and the weight of the whole flour, from a bushel of wheat of all the sorts separately, and of the whole jointly.

In order to comply therewith, we ordered seven parcels of five quarters of wheat each, of the growth of the last year and of the following weights, to be brought, *viz.*

Pounds.

Five quarters of 52 per bushel.
 Five quarters of 53 per ditto.
 Five quarters of 55 per ditto.
 Five quarters of 57 per ditto.
 Five quarters of 56 per ditto.
 Five quarters of 61 per ditto.
 Five quarters of 62 per ditto.

In pursuance of which, our officers purchased seven parcels of wheat of five quarters each, of the growth of *Lowland*, *near* as near the foregoing weights as they could meet with, *viz.*

Pounds. oz. dr.

Five quarters of 51	14	9	$\frac{3}{4}$	per bushel.
Five quarters of 53	3	0	—	per ditto.
Five quarters of 55	0	6	$\frac{1}{8}$	per ditto.
Five quarters of 56	15	12	$\frac{1}{8}$	per ditto.
Five quarters of 59	0	8	—	per ditto.
Five quarters of 60	10	4	$\frac{1}{8}$	per ditto.
Five quarters of 61	9	14	$\frac{1}{8}$	per ditto.

And the account (No. 1) enclosed, shews the waste in grinding of each parcel; also the weight of the flour of the whole wheat produced therefrom, dressed through a thirteen shilling bolting cloth; also of the bran, and how much the said flour turns out from a bushel of wheat from each parcel; also the weight of bran from ditto; and how much the said flour and bran comes out from a bushel of wheat, upon an average of the seven parcels. And we are to observe, that there doth not appear to us to be any bolting cloth that will, at one dressing, clear the bran and pollard so thoroughly from the flour, but what some very small portion of the finest part of the pollard will remain therein, unless the bolting cloth be so fine as to give room for a great deal of the flour to pass off with the bran. But we apprehend that a thirteen shilling cloth will, at one dressing, clear the meal from the bran and pollard to nearly, as to produce what may be very well deemed the whole flour of the wheat, or standard wheaten flour.

Governor Pownall having, since his memorandum before mentioned, signified his desire that experiments on three of four parcels of such wheat as is most common in market for bread, might be through a fourteen shilling cloth, we made enquiry concerning those sorts, and ordered our officers to buy,

Five quarters of wheat of 58	per bushel.
Five quarters of ditto of 59	per ditto.
Five quarters of ditto of 60	per ditto.
Five quarters of ditto of 61	per ditto.

And to cause half the meal that should be produced to be dressed through a fourteen shilling cloth, and the other half through a thirteen shilling cloth. In pursuance of which they purchased the following parcels, being as near the weights directed as could be met with, *viz.*

Pounds. oz. dr.

Five quarters of 58	1	9	$\frac{1}{8}$	per bushel.
Five quarters of 58	15	14	$\frac{1}{8}$	per ditto.
Five quarters of 59	15	9	$\frac{3}{8}$	per ditto.
Five quarters of 61	0	0	—	per ditto.

And

And having dressed half the meal arising therefrom, through a ~~fourteen shilling~~ cloth, and the other half through a thirteen shilling cloth, the account enclosed (No. 2) shews the weight of flour and bran produced at one dressing through a fourteen shilling cloth; and the account (No. 3) the weight of flour and bran produced at one dressing through the thirteen shilling cloth: so that by comparing those accounts, the different produce arising from dressing with the said cloths, will appear in the clearest manner.

And with respect to the description of the said cloths, they are each of them six feet in length, and six feet seven inches in breadth at the head, and six feet broad at the tail, and are composed of woollen yarn, and weigh one pound each when new. And the thirteen shilling cloth consists of thirty-two threads to an inch in the warp, and of twenty-eight to an inch in the shute. And the fourteen shilling cloth consists of forty threads to an inch in the warp, and thirty-six to an inch in the shute.

And with regard to that part of the governor's memorandum which desires that it may be ascertained what sort of bolting cloth will at one operation, separate the finest half of the flour from the coarser half; we beg leave to observe, that we do not believe, from the trials which have been made, that any one sort of bolting cloth will perform that operation: But we have room to think that the end may be obtained by dressing through two different cloths: And our officers are under orders to try how far this may succeed, and we shall very shortly make a report thereof to their lordships.

We bespoke, and have very lately received two wire machines for dressing of flour, from the Patentee at Manchester; one of which is intended to try whether the whole flour of the wheat can be separated at one operation, and the other to ascertain, whether, at one operation, the finer half of the flour can be separated from the coarser half; and we have ordered them to be forthwith set up at his majesty's mill's, and trials to be made how they will answer; which we shall report to their lordships as soon as possible.

We beg leave, lastly, to observe, that Governor Pownall, in his memorandum, desired that the experiments mentioned therein might be made both from new and old wheats; but as we were informed, upon enquiry, that there was then very little, if any, difference between the wheats of the growth of the last year, and those which were older, and that it would be very difficult to meet with the latter of the different weights that were judged expedient to be made trial of, we thought it the most certain way to make use of the wheats of the growth of the last year for the several experiments, and gave directions therein accordingly; but if the governor should think it material to have any older wheats made trial of, we shall endeavour to procure such as he may point

REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE, &c.

out for that purpose. We herewith return Mr Cooper's letter, and Governor Pownall's memorandum which accompanied the same; and are,

S I R,

Your most humble Servants,

*James Wallace. Robert Pett. Jonas Hanway. Thomas Calby.
A. Chorley.*

Philip Stewens, Esq.
Secretary of the Admiralty.

No. 1.

An Account shewing the Weight of the Whole Flour of the Wheat, without any Division, produced from Seven different Parcels of that Grain, of the respective Weights *per* Bushel against each parcel expressed, by drizzling through a Thirteen Shilling Bolting Cloth only: Also, the Weight of Bran arising from each Parcel of Wheat; and how the weight of the said Whole Flour, and Bran, from a Bushel of Wheat, comes out, from each parcel respectively: also, the Average Weight of the Whole Flour and Bran, from a Bushel of Wheat, taking all the Seven Parcels of Wheat together; *viz.*

W H E A T.					MEAL.		Loss on Grind- ing.		The whole flour of the wheat, dress- ed through a thirteen shil- ling cloth.		Loss on Dress- ing.		BRAN		Weight of flour pro- duced from a bushel of wheat of each parcel.				Average weight of the whole flour, from a bushel of wheat, on the whole of the seven parcels.				
Measure.	Weight per bushel.	Weight of the bushel.			lb.	lb.	lb.	lb.	lb.	lb.	lb.	lb.	lb.	lb.	lb.	oz.	dr.	lb.	oz.	dr.	lb.	oz.	dr.
		lb.	oz.	dr.																			
No.																							
5	31 14	9 2 8	2,076 1		2,046 1	30	1,375 1	22 1	648 1	34	6	4	16	3	6								
5	63 3	—	2,127 1		2,109 1	18	1,545 1	16 1	547 1	38	10	3	13	11	1								
5	55 —	6 8	2,201		2,174 1	26 1	1,588 1	21 1	564 1	39	21	6	14	2	24								
5	50 15	12 8	2,279 1		2,254 1	25 1	1,744 1	15	494 1	43	9	20	12	5	12			43	5	13			
5	59 —	8	2,361 1		2,337 1	24	1,841 1	8 1	487 1	46	—	5	12	3	1						32		9
5	60 10	4 8	2,449 1		2,402 1	23 1	2,010 1	7 1	384 1	50	4	3	9	9	12								
5	61 9	14 8	2,484 1		2,437	27 1	2,096 1	8 1	392 1	50	24	11	9	12	11								

No. 2.

An Account shewing the Whole Flour of the Wheat, without any Division, produced from Four Parcels of the said Grain, of the respective Weights per Bushel against each Parcel expressed, by dressing through a Fourteen Shilling Belting Cloth only: Also, the Weight of Bran arising from each Parcel, and how the Weight of the said Whole Flour, and Bran, from a Bushel of Wheat, comes out from each Parcel respectively: Also, the Average Weight of the said Flour, and Bran, from a Bushel of Wheat, taking all the said Four Parcels of Wheat together.

W H E A T.																								
Measure.	Qrs.	Bush.	Weight of the whole.		MEAL.	Loss in grinding.	The whole flour of the wheat dressed through a fourteen shilling cloth.	Loss on dressing.	BRAN.	Weight of flour from a bushel of wheat from each parcel.	Weight of bran from a bushel of wheat from each parcel.	Average weight of flour from a bushel of wheat, on the whole of the four parcels.	Average weight of bran from a bushel of wheat, on the whole of the four parcels.											
			lb.	oz.																				
2	4	58	1	9 $\frac{1}{2}$	1,149	13	914	3 $\frac{1}{2}$	321 $\frac{1}{2}$	45	11	3	11	9	3									
2	4	58	15	14 $\frac{1}{2}$	1,167 $\frac{1}{2}$	12 $\frac{1}{2}$	934 $\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	232 $\frac{1}{2}$	46	11	12	11	9	12									
2	4	59	13	9 $\frac{1}{2}$	1,185 $\frac{1}{2}$	11 $\frac{1}{2}$	948 $\frac{1}{2}$	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	232	47	6	12	11	9	9	47	5	3						
2	4	61		—	1,203 $\frac{1}{2}$	11 $\frac{1}{2}$	987 $\frac{1}{2}$	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	214 $\frac{1}{2}$	49	7	9	10	11	9									

B.

Copy of a Letter from the Commissioners for victualing his Majesty's Navy, to *Philip Stephens*, Esq. Secretary of the Admiralty, dated 10 June 1774.

IN our letter of the 30 of last month, we acquainted you, for the information of the Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, that we did not believe, from the trials which had been then made, that any one sort of bolting cloth would, at one operation, separate the finest half of the flour from the coarser half; but that we had room to think the end might be obtained by dressing through two different cloths. And from the trials that have been made since, it appears, that a thirteen shilling cloth and a twenty-one shilling cloth, by being made use of in the manner described in the inclosed account (No. 1) will come as near the matter as can be reasonably expected.

We further acquainted, that we had received two wire bolting machines from Manchester, for dressing of Flour; One of them calculated to take out the whole flour of the wheat at one operation; and the other for separating, at one operation, the finer half of the flour from the coarser half: and trial having been since made of the said machines, it appears by the inclosed account (No. 2) that the machine which was marked (A), and calculated to separate the whole flour of the wheat at one operation, produces flour, in quantity and quality, as nearly equal as can be reasonably expected, to the flour dressed through a thirteen shilling cloth; and therefore we apprehend will answer the purpose intended. The description of the wire work of this machine is upon the said account, (No. 2).

But with respect to the other machine, which was designed to separate, at one operation, the finer half of the flour from the coarser half; we find upon trial, that it will not answer that end, without undergoing some alteration.

No. 1.

An Account, shewing what bolting Cloths will, on dressing of Flour, divide the same into the finer Half for Wheaten Bread, and the coarser Half for Household Bread; so far as Experiments have been made, viz.

Flour from 5 Quarters of Wheat, weighing 59 Pounds 10 Ounces, and 6 Drams $\frac{1}{16}$, dressed through a 13 Shilling Cloth, amounted to

Flour 1,956 Pounds 8 Ounces, which was dressed through a 13 Shilling Cloth; being dressed again through a 22 Shilling Cloth, with a Partition placed in the Bolting Mill, at 3 Feet 7 Inches on a Medium from the Head of the said Mill, produced,

			In the Upper Division.			In the Lower Division.		
			Finest Flour.			Coarser Flour.		
Pounds.	oz.	dr.	Pounds.	oz.	dr.	Pounds.	oz.	dr.
1,956	8	—	952	—	—	992	—	—

N. B. The above Dressings divide the whole Flour, of the Wheat, Half into the finer Sort, and Half into the coarser Sort within 33 Pounds, out of 1,956 Pounds 8 Ounces.

REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE, &c.

No. 2.
An ACCOUNT, shewing the Produce of Flour, from 5 Quarters of Wheat, of 59 Pounds 10 Ounces 6 Drams $\frac{1}{8}$ per bushel, dressed at one Operation through the Wire Bolting Machine (marked A) which is described at the Foot hereof, viz.

Wheat weighing 59lb. 10 oz. 6dr $\frac{1}{8}$ per bushel.	Total Weight of the Wheat.	Weight of the Meal.	Weight of the Flour.	Weight of the Bran.	Weight of Flour from a bushel of Wheat.	Weight of Bran from a bushel of Wheat.
Quarters.	Pounds.	Pounds.	Pounds.	Pounds.	lb. oz. dr.	lb. oz. dr.
5	2,386	2,353 $\frac{1}{2}$	1,934 $\frac{1}{2}$	410	48 5 12	10 4

N.B. The wire work of the above machine consists of 42 wires to an inch both ways, and the weight of six inches square of the said wire work is one ounce and one dram.

V.C.

Copy of a letter from the Commissioners for victualling His Majesty's navy, to Philip Stephens, Esquire, Secretary of the Admiralty, 11th June, 1774.

IN addition to our letter of the 24th day's date, relating to the experiments of dressing of wool, we pray leave to acquaint you, for the information of the Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners of the admiralty, that a twenty-one shilling bolting cloth is six feet in length, and six feet seven inches in breadth at the head, and six feet broad at the tail; and is composed of woollen yarn; and weighs one pound when new; and consists of sixty-four threads to an inch in the warp, and of fifty-two threads to an inch in the shute.

D.

The Average price of wheat at the Corn Exchange, per quarter, with the Price of Flour.

1759.		£.	s.	d.	
	FROM September 3d, to Sept. 10th	1	8	1½	per quar.
	New wheaten flour sold for	1	8	0	per sack
	Old Do —	1	7	0	
	From September 10th to Sept. 17th	1	8	0	per quar.
	Wheaten flour sold for	1	7	0	per sack
	From September 17th to Sept. 24th	1	7	4½	per quar.
	Wheaten flour sold for	1	6	0	per sack
	From September 24th to October 1st	1	8	0	per quar.
	Wheaten flour sold for	1	6	0	per sack
	From October 1st to October 8th	1	8	5	per quar.
	Wheaten flour sold for	1	6	0	per sack
	From October 8th to October 15th	1	8	6½	per quar.
	Wheaten flour sold for	1	6	0	per sack
1760.					
	From 3d March to 10th	1	7	2	per quar.
	Wheaten flour sold for	1	6	0	per sack
	From March 10th to the 17th	1	7	1½	per quar.
	Wheaten flour sold for	1	4	0	per sack
	From March 17th to the 24th	1	6	8½	per quar.
	Wheaten flour sold for	1	4	0	per sack
	From March 24th to the 31st	1	7	3½	per quar.
	Wheaten flour	1	6	0	per sack
	From March 31st to April 7th	1	8	1½	per quar.
	Wheaten Flour	1	6	0	per sack
	k 2				From

REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE, &c.

1760.

	£.	s.	d.	
From September 1st to Sept. 8th	1	9	11½	per quar.
Wheaten flour sold for	1	6	0	per sack
From September 8th to the 15th	1	11	0	per quar.
Wheaten flour sold for	1	7	0	per sack
From September 15th to the 22d	1	11	5½	per quar.
Wheaten flour	1	6	0	per sack
From September 22d to the 29th	1	9	6	per quar.
Wheaten flour	1	6	0	per sack
From September 29th to October 6th	1	9	5	per quar.
Wheaten flour	1	6	0	per sack
From October 6th to the 13th	1	8	10	per quar.
Wheaten flour	1	6	0	per sack

1761.

From March 2d to March 9th	1	4	0	per quar.
Wheaten flour sold for	1	3	0	per sack
From March 9th to the 16th	1	3	0½	per quar.
Wheaten flour	1	1	0	per sack
From March 16th to the 23d	1	2	6½	per quar.
Wheaten flour	1	1	0	per sack
From March 23d to 30th	1	2	2½	per quar.
Wheaten flour	1	1	0	per sack
From March 30th to April 6th	1	2	4½	per quar.
Wheaten flour	1	1	0	per sack
From September 1st to Sept. 7th	1	2	7	per quar.
Wheaten flour	1	1	0	per sack
From September 7th to the 14th	1	2	10½	per quar.
Wheaten flour	1	1	0	per sack
From September 14th to the 21st	1	3	2½	per quar.
Wheaten flour	1	1	0	per sack
From September 21st to the 28th	1	3	1	per quar.
Wheaten flour	1	1	0	per sack
From September 28th to October 5th	1	2	10½	per quar.
Wheaten flour	1	1	0	per sack
From October 5th to the 12th	1	3	7½	per quar.
Wheaten flour	1	1	0	per sack

2.

From 1st March to 8th March	1	7	6½	per quar.
Wheaten flour	1	4	0	per sack
From the 8th of March to the 15th	1	11	6	per quar.
Wheaten flour	1	7	0	per sack

From

REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE, &c.

69

1762.

From the 15th of March to the 22d	1	8	6	per quar.
Wheaten flour	—	—	8	0 per sack
From the 22d March to the 29th	1	12	2	per quar.
Wheaten flour	£.1	0	8	0 per sack
From the 29th March to the 5th April	1	12	3	per quar.
Wheaten flour	—	—	8	0 per sack
From the 30th August to the 5th Septem.	1	11	0	per quar.
Wheaten flour	—	—	7	0 per sack
From 6th September to the 13th	1	12	1	per quar.
Wheaten flour	£.1	6	0	0 per sack
From 13th September to the 20th	1	12	4	per quar.
Wheaten flour	—	—	7	0 per sack
From 20th September to the 27th	1	10	1	per quar.
Wheaten flour	—	—	7	0 per sack
From 27th Sept. to the 4th October	1	11	6	per quar.
Wheaten flour	—	—	7	0 per sack
From 4th October to the 11th	1	10	8	per quar.
Wheaten flour	—	—	7	0 per sack

1763.

From February 28 to March 7th	1	9	1	per quar.
Wheaten flour	—	—	10	0 per sack
From the 7th March to the 14th	1	10	0	per quar.
Wheaten flour	£.1	8	0	0 per sack
From the 14th March to the 21st	1	10	2	per quar.
Wheaten flour	£.1	7	0	0 per sack
From the 21st of March to the 28th	1	9	8	per quar.
Wheaten flour	£.1	6	0	0 per sack
From the 28th of March to 4th April	1	8	0	per quar.
Wheaten flour	—	—	6	0 per sack
From 29th August to September 5th	1	12	7	per quar.
Wheaten flour	—	—	8	0 per sack
From September 5th to the 12th	1	15	2	per quar.
Wheaten flour	£.1	8	0	0 per sack
From September 12 to the 19	1	15	4	per quar.
Wheaten flour	—	—	9	0 per sack
From September 19 to the 26	1	14	8	per quar.
Wheaten flour	—	—	9	0 per sack
From September 26th to October 3d	1	14	4	per quar.
Wheaten flour	£.1	8	0	0 per sack
From October 3d to the 10th	1	13	11	per quar.
Wheaten flour	£.1	9	0	0 per sack

1764.

1764.

	£.	s.	d.	
From February 27 to March the 5th	1	14	2½	per quar.
Wheaten flour	1	9	0	per sack
From March 5th to the 12th	1	7	3½	per quar.
Wheaten flour	1	13	0	per sack
From March 12 to the 19th	1	18	2	per quar.
Wheaten flour	1	15	0	per sack
From March 19 to the 26th	1	17	9	per quar.
Wheaten flour	1	15	0	per sack
From March 26 to April 2d	1	18	4	per quar.
Wheaten flour	1	14	0	per sack
From September 3d to the 10th	1	16	11½	per quar.
Wheaten flour	1	13	0	per sack
From September 10 to the 17th	1	15	1	per quar.
Wheaten flour	1	13	0	per sack
From September 17 to the 24th	1	17	6½	per quar.
Wheaten flour	1	13	0	per sack
From Sept. 24th to the 1st Oct.	1	16	8½	per quar.
Wheaten flour	1	13	0	per sack
From October 1st to the 8th	1	17	10½	per quar.
Wheaten flour	1	13	0	per sack
From October 8th to the 15th	1	17	1¾	per quar.
Wheaten flour	1	14	0	per sack
From March 4th to March 11th	2	5	0¾	per quar.
Wheaten flour	2	0	0	per sack
From March 11th to the 18th	2	3	11½	per quar.
Flour	2	0	0	per sack
From March 18 to the 25th	2	4	7	per quar.
Flour	2	0	0	
From March 25th to the 1st April	2	6	7½	per quar.
Wheaten flour	2	1	0	per sack
From April 1st to the 8th	2	6	11½	per quar.
Flour	2	1	0	per sack
From September 2d to September 9th	2	1	2½	per quar.
Flour, none sold				
From September 9th to the 16th	1	17	3	per quar.
Flour	1	16	0	per sack
From September 16th to the 23d	1	17	11½	per quar.
Flour	1	13	0	per sack
From September 23d to the 30th	2	0	2	per quar.
Flour, none sold				

REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE, &c.

1765.

	£.	s.	d.	
From September 30th to October 7th	2	0	2	per quar.
Flour sold	1	16	0	per sack
From October 7th to the 14th	1	19	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	per quar.
Flour sold	1	16	0	per sack

1766.

From March 3d to March 10th	1	17	3	per quar.
Flour	1	11	0	per sack
From March 10th to March the 17th	1	16	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	per quar.
Flour	1	11	0	per sack
From March 17th to the 24th	1	15	8 $\frac{1}{2}$	per quar.
Flour	1	14	0	per sack
From March 24th to the 31st	1	14	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	per quar.
Flour	1	11	0	per sack
From March 31st to April 7th	1	14	2	per quar.
Flour	1	9	0	per sack
From September 1st to September 8th	2	5	9 $\frac{1}{2}$	per quar.
Flour	1	18	0	per sack
From September 8th to the 15th	1	8	0	per quar.
Flour	1	19	0	per sack
From September 15 to the 22d	2	7	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	per quar.
Flour	2	0	9	per sack
From September 22d to the 29th	2	2	2	per quar.
Flour	2	0	0	per sack
From September 29 to October 6th	2	0	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	per quar.
Flour	1	19	0	per sack
From October 6th to the 13th	2	12	10	per quar.
Flour	1	19	0	per sack

1767.

From March 2d to March 9th	2	7	2	per quar.
Flour	2	6	0	per sack
From March 9th to the 16th	2	8	0 $\frac{1}{2}$	per quar.
Flour	2	6	0	per sack
From March 16 to the 23d	2	9	0	per quar.
Flour	2	6	0	per sack
From March 23d to the 30th	2	9	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	per quar.
Flour	2	6	0	per sack
From March 30th to April 6th	2	8	0	per quar.
Flour	2	6	0	per sack
From 31st Augt to 7th September	2	4	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	per quar.
Flour	2	2	0	per sack
From 7th September to the 14th	2	4	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	per quar.
Flour	2	1	0	per sack

1767.

REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE, &c.

		£.	s.	d.	
1785.	From September 14th to the 21st	2	6	6½	per quar.
	Flour	2	1	0	per sack
	From September 21st to the 28th	2	9	5½	per quar.
	Flour	2	3	0	per sack
	From Sept. 28th to the 5th October	2	10	10	per quar.
	Flour	2	4	0	per sack
	From October 5th to the 12th	2	11	7	per quar.
	Flour	2	5	0	per sack
1786.	From February 29th to March 7th	2	9	7½	per quar.
	Flour	2	6	0	per sack
	From March 7th to the 14th	2	10	0½	per quar.
	Flour	2	6	0	per sack
	From March 14th to the 21st	2	8	9½	per quar.
	Flour	2	6	0	per sack
	From March 21st to the 28th	2	8	11	per quar.
	Flour	2	6	0	per sack
	From March 28th to April 4th	2	8	5	per quar.
	Flour	2	6	0	per sack
	From August 26th to September 5th	2	5	11	per quar.
	Wheaten Flour	2	3	0	per sack
	September 7th and 9th	2	1	5½	per quar.
	Flour	2	3	0	per sack
	September 9th	1	8	9	per quar.
	Flour	2	3	0	per sack
	From September 9th to the 12th	2	6	1¼	per quar.
	Wheaten Flour	2	3	0	per sack
	From September 12th to the 14th	2	4	2	per quar.
	Flour	2	3	0	per sack
	From September 14 to the 16th	1	15	1½	per quar.
	Flour	2	3	0	per sack
	From September 16 to the 19th	2	6	9	per quar.
	Flour	2	2	0	per sack
	From September 19th to the 23d	2	1	5	per quar.
	Flour	2	0	0	per sack
	From September 23d to the 26th	2	3	4	per quar.
	Flour	2	0	0	per sack
	From September 26th to the 28th	1	18	4	per quar.
	Wheaten Flour none fold				
	From September 28th to the 30th	1	17	2½	per quar.
	Flour	1	18	0	per sack

1768.

	£.	s.	d.	
From September 30th to October 3d	1	15	8½	per quar.
Flour	1	18	0	per sack
From October 3d to the 5th	1	16	7½	per quar.
Flour	£.1	16	0	and 1 17 0 per sack
From October 5th to the 7th	1	12	0	per quar.
Flour	1	16	0	per sack
From October 7th to the 10th	1	14	5	per quar.
Flour	1	16	0	per sack
From October 10th to the 12th	1	15	4½	per quar.
Flour	1	16	0	per sack
From October 12th to the 14th	1	11	8	per quar.
Flour, none sold				

1769.

From 1st March to 6th March	1	14	4½	per quar.
Flour	1	13	0	per sack
From 6th March to 8th March	1	16	4½	per quar.
Flour	1	13	0	per sack
From 8th March to 13th March	1	15	4½	per quar.
Flour	1	13	0	per sack
From 13th March to 15th March	1	16	4	per quar.
Flour	1	13	0	per sack
From 15th March to 20th March	1	14	8	per quar.
Flour	1	13	0	per sack
From 20th March to 22d March	1	15	4½	per quar.
Flour	1	13	0	per sack
From 22d March to 27th March	1	14	9½	per quar.
Flour	1	13	0	per sack
From 29th March to 3d April	1	12	10¾	per quar.
Flour	1	13	0	per sack
From 3d April to 5th April	1	16	5½	per quar.
Flour	1	13	0	per sack
From 5th April to 10th April	1	14	8	per quar.
Flour	1	13	0	per sack
From 1st September to 5th September	1	11	8½	per quar.
Flour	1	10	0	per sack
From 5th September to 6th September	1	14	8½	per quar.
Flour	1	10	0	per sack
From 6th September to 11th September	1	14	8½	per quar.
Flour	1	10	0	per sack
From 11th September to 13th Sept.	1	15	1	per quar.
Flour	£.1	10	0	and 1 11 0 per sack
From 13th September to 18th Sept.	1	15	0¾	per quar.
Flour	1	11	0	per sack

1769.

	£.	s.	d.	
From 18th September to 20th Sept.	1	16	3	per quar.
Flour	1	11	0	per sack
From 20th September to 25th Sept.	1	13	10	per quar.
Flour	1	11	0	per sack
From 25th Sept. to 27th Sept.		14	2	per quar.
Flour		10	0	per sack
From 27th Sept. to 2d October		13	0	per quar.
Flour		10	0	per sack
From 2d October to 4th October		13	10	per quar.
Flour		10	0	per sack
From 4th October to 9th October		13	4	per quar.
Flour		10	0	per sack
From 9th October to 11th October		15	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	per quar.
Flour		10	0	per sack
From 11th October to 13th October		15	0	per quar.
Flour		10	0	per sack

1770.

From 2d March to 5th March	1	9	7 $\frac{3}{4}$	per quar.
Flour	1	8	0	per sack
From 5th March to 7th March	11	1 $\frac{1}{2}$		per quar.
Flour	8	0		per sack
From 7th March to 12th March	12	1 $\frac{1}{2}$		per quar.
Flour	8	0		per sack
From 12th March to 14th March	12	10		per quar.
Flour	8	0		per sack
From 14th March to 19th March	12	7		per quar.
Flour		0		per sack
From 19th March to 21st March	11	8 $\frac{1}{2}$		per quar.
Flour	8	0		per sack
From 21st March to 26th March	13	5 $\frac{1}{4}$		per quar.
Flour	8	0		per sack
From 26th March to 28th March	12	9 $\frac{1}{4}$		per quar.
Flour	8	0		per sack
From 28th March to 2d April	12	1 $\frac{1}{2}$		per quar.
Flour	8	0		per sack
From 2d April to 4th April	13	0 $\frac{1}{4}$		per quar.
Flour	8	0		per sack
From 4th April to 6th April	12	4		per quar.
Flour	8	0		per sack
From 3d Sept. to 5th Sept.	2	1	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	per quar.
Flour	1	16	0	per sack

From

1770.

From 5th Sept. to 10th Sept.	1	19	6½	per quar.
Flour	1	16	0	per sack
From 10th Sept. to 12th Sept.	2	2	5	per quar.
Flour	1	16	0	per sack
From 12th Sept. to 17th Sept.	1	18	1½	per quar.
Flour	1	16	0	per sack
From 17th Sept. to 19th Sept.	2	2	1½	per quar.
Flour	1	16	0	per sack
From 19th Sept. to 24th Sept.	2	2	5½	per quar.
Flour	1	16	0	per sack
From 24th Sept. to 26th Sept.	2	4	0	per quar.
Flour	1	16	0	per sack
From 26th Sept. to 1st October	2	4	7	per quar.
Flour	1	16	0	per sack
From 1st October to 3d Oct.	2	4	11½	per quar.
Flour	£1	16	0 and 1	17 0 per sack
From 3d October to 8th Oct.	2	4	6½	per quar.
Flour	£1	16	0 and 1	17 0 per sack
From 8th October to 10th Oct.	2	3	8	per quar.
Flour	£1	16	0 and 1	17 0 per sack
From 10th October to 15th Oct.	2	0	2¾	per quar.
Flour				No price fixt

1771.

From 1st March to 4th March	2	2	0	per quar.
Flour	1	18	0	per sack
From 4th March to 6th March	2	3	3½	per quar.
Flour	1	18	0	per sack
From 6th March to 11th March	2	2	9½	per quar.
Flour	1	18	0	per sack
From 11th March to 13th March	2	3	7	per quar.
Flour	1	18	0	per sack
From 13th March to 18th March	2	1	6	per quar.
Flour	1	18	0	per sack
From 18th March to 20th March	2	4	5	per quar.
Flour	1	18	0	per sack
From 20th to 25th March	2	3	7	per quar.
Flour	1	18	0	per sack
From 25th March to 27th March	2	3	4	per quar.
Flour	1	18	0	per sack
From 27th March to 1st April	2	2	0½	per quar.
Flour	1	18	0	per sack

From

1771.

	£.	s.	d.	
From 1st April to 3d April -	2	2	9½	per quar.
Flour — — — — —	1	18	0	per sack
From 3d April to 8th April —	2	1	9½	per quar.
Flour — — — — —	1	18	0	per sack
From 2d September to 4th September	2	5		quar.
Flour — — — — —	1	18		
From 4th September to 9th Sept.	2	2	1	per quar.
Flour - - - - -	1	18	0	per sack
From 9th September to 11th Sept.	2	5	5¾	per quar.
Flour — — — — —	1	18	0	per sack
From 11th September to 16th Sept.	2	6	9	per quar.
Flour — — — — — £. 1 18 0 and	1	19	0	per sack
From 16th September to 18th Sept.	2	5	3	per quar.
Flour — — — — — £. 1 19 0 and	2	0	0	per sack
From 18th September to 23d Sept.	2	4	1½	per quar.
Flour — — — — —	1	19	0	per sack
From 23d September to 25th Sept.	2	4	7½	per quar.
Flour — — — — — £. 1 19 0 and	2	0	0	per sack
From 25th September to 30th Sept.	2	4	8½	per quar.
Flour — — — — — £. 1 19 0 and	2	0	0	per sack
From 30th September to 2d Oct.	2	4	4½	per quar.
Flour — — — — — £. 1 19 0 and	2	0	0	per sack
From 2d October to 7th Oct.	2	2	11	per quar.
Flour — — — — —	1	19	0	per sack
From 7th October to 9th Oct.	2	3	6½	per quar.
Flour — — — — —	1	19	0	per sack
From 9th October to 14th Oct.	2	4	2¾	per quar.
Flour — — — — — £. 1 19 0 new and	2	0	0	old per sack

1772.

From 2d March to 4th March	2	6	1	per quar.
Flour — — — — —	2	0	0	per sack
From 4th March to 9th March -	2	5	7½	per quar.
Flour — — — — —	2	0	0	per sack
From 9th March to 11th March	2	6	7¾	per quar.
Flour — — — — —	2	0	0	per sack
From 11th March to 16th March	2	6	5¼	per quar.
Flour — — — — —	2	0	0	per sack
From 16th March to 18th March	2	9	6¾	per quar.
Flour — — — — —	2	2	0	per sack
From 18th March to 23d March	2	7	8	per quar.
Flour — — — — —	2	2	0	per sack

1772.

1772.

	£.	s.	d.	
From 23d March to 25th March	2	10	11½	per quar.
Flour	2	4	0	per sack
From 25th March to 30th March	2	10	6	per quar.
Flour	£.2	3	0 and	2 4 0 per sack
From 30th March to 1st April	2	13	8¼	per quar.
Flour	£.2	5	0 and	2 6 0 per sack
From 1st April to 6th April	2	13	7½	per quar.
Flour	£.2	5	0 and	2 6 0 per sack
From 6th April to 8th April	2	12	6½	per quar.
Flour	2	5	0	per sack
From 2d September to 7th Sept.	2	11	9	per quar.
Flour	2	5	0	per sack
From 7th September to 9th Sept.	2	13	2	per quar.
Flour	2	5	0	per sack
From 9th September to 14th Sept.	2	14	0	per quar.
Flour	2	5	0	per sack
From 14th September to 16th Sept.	2	14	7½	per quar.
Flour	2	5	0	per sack
From 16th September to 21st Sept.	2	14	7½	per quar.
Flour	2	5	0	per sack
From 21st September to 23d Sept.	2	13	0½	per quar.
Flour	2	5	0	per sack
From 23d September to 28th Sept.	2	12	1½	per quar.
Flour	2	5	0	per sack
From 28th September to 30th Sept.	2	14	9¾	per quar.
Flour	2	5	0	per sack
From 30th September to 5th October	2	12	8¾	per quar.
Flour	2	5	0	per sack
From 5th October to 7th Oct.	2	12	10	per quar.
Flour	2	5	0	per sack
From 7th October to 12th Oct.	2	10	2½	per quar.
Flour	2	5	0	per sack
From 12th October to 14th Oct.	2	11	7½	per quar.
Flour	2	5	0	per sack

1773.

From 1st March to 3d March	2	14	6	per quar.
Flour	2	3	0	per sack
From 3d March to 8th March	2	10	3½	per quar.
Flour	2	3	0	per sack
From 8th March to 10th March	2	12	5¼	per quar.
Flour	2	3	0	per sack

1773.

REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE, &c.

1773.

	£.	s.	d.	
From 10th March to 15th March	2	8	4½	per quar.
Flour ———	2	3	0	per sack
From 15th March to 17th March	2	11	0	per quar.
Flour ———	2	3	0	per sack
From 17th March to 22d March	2	11	7	per quar.
Flour ———	2	3	0	per sack
From 22d March to 24th March	2	10	11½	per quar.
Flour ———	2	3	0	per sack
From 24th March to 29th March	2	13	1¾	per quar.
Flour ———	2	3	0	per sack
From 29th March to 31st March	2	12	10	per quar.
Flour ———	2	3	0	per sack
From 31st March to 5th April	2	13	10¾	per quar.
Flour ———	2	3	0	per sack
From 5th April to 7th April	2	11	8½	per quar.
Flour ———	2	3	0	per sack
From 1st September to 6th Sept.	2	16	0	per quar.
Flour ———	2	8	0	per sack
From 6th September to 8th Sept.	2	16	1¼	per quar.
Flour ———	2	8	0	per sack
From 8th September to 13th Sept.	2	10	7½	per quar.
Flour ———	2	8	0	per sack
From 13th September to 15th Sept.	2	15	2	per quar.
Flour ———	2	8	0	per sack
From 15th September to 20th Sept.	2	16	0	per quar.
Flour ———	2	8	0	per sack
From 20th September to 22d Sept.	2	13	10¼	per quar.
Flour ———	2	8	0	per sack
From 22d September to 27th Sept.	2	14	5½	per quar.
Flour ———	2	8	0	per sack
From 27th September to 29th Sept.	2	12	1¼	per quar.
Flour ———	2	8	0	per sack
From 29th September to 4th Oct.	2	9	11¾	per quar.
Flour — £.2 7 0 new, and 2 8 0 old,	2	8	0	per sack
From 4th October to 6th Oct.	2	10	7¼	per quar.
Flour — £.2 7 0 new, and 2 8 0 old,	2	8	0	per sack
From 6th October to 11th Oct.	2	7	7¼	per quar.
Flour — £.2 7 0 new, and 2 8 0 old,	2	8	0	per sack
From 11th October to 13th Oct.	2	9	1¾	per quar.
Flour £2 6 0 new, £.2 7 0 and 2 8 0 old,	2	8	0	per sack

E. N^o 1.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. Milne of Manchester.

Manchester, 1st January, 1774.

S I R,

A Few days ago I sent directed to you ; viz.

			s.	£.	s.	d.
2 Divisions of finest Wire Work, N ^o 60, at 15 per	—	—	—	1	10	0
2 Ditto	—	—	N ^o 58, at 15 per	—	1	10 0
2 Ditto	—	—	N ^o 54, at 15 per	—	1	10 0
2 Ditto	—	—	N ^o 48, at 10 per	—	1	0 0
2 Ditto	—	—	N ^o 42, at 7 per	—	0	14 0
2 Ditto	—	—	N ^o 35, at 7 per	—	0	14 0
2 Ditto	—	—	N ^o 30, at 5 per	—	0	10 0
2 Ditto	—	—	N ^o 24, at 2 6d. per	0	5	0 0
2 Ditto	—	—	N ^o 12, at 2 6d. per	0	5	0 0
				7	18	0

A division is in length just right to reach round a machine, and in breadth sufficient to reach between one wood circle and another ; but we generally make the wire work 2 divisions broad. Our common flour machines (of which I think we make twenty times as many as any other sort) are intended to dress fine flour, 2ds, and 3ds, and divide the pollard at one operation : they are about 6 feet long, and have 15 divisions of wire work in them, which are of the following sorts ; viz.

4 of the top divisions, are	N ^o 54.
4 next	— — N ^o 58, or 60.
3 D ^o	— — N ^o 30, or 35.
2 D ^o for fine pollard	N ^o 24.
2 D ^o for coarse pollard	N ^o 12.

And these machines for dressing basket stuff, are composed of wire work as follows :

4 Divisions at top	—	N ^o 35.
7 Ditto	—	N ^o 42.
4 Ditto	—	N ^o 24.

You have both of these sorts of machines in use at your mills at Redhouse and Rotherhithe, on which account I thought it would be best to send you perfect divisions as above ; and when you have tried the necessary experiments with them, they will do to repair those machines with you. You desire to know how many wires there are in an inch long and an inch broad in every sort of wire work : with regard to that, every number describes itself

itself; for instance, N^o 60, hath 60 wires in an inch, both length and breadth; and so of all the rest.

• If you want any further instructions, you may freely command,

S I R,

Your most obedient servant,

JOHN MILNE.

Copy.

HENRY PELHAM.

E. N^o 2.

Copy of a Letter from Mr. Milne, of Manchester, to Mr. Pelham of the Victualing Office, dated the 2d of February 1774.

S I R,

YOUR favour of the 27th lies before me, by which I observe you have received the wire work, &c. You desire to know what N^o of wire work is proper, to take out of any given quantity of flour, about half of the finest sort, for wheaten bread, the other half to make household bread. I think 4 divisions (N^o 54) at the top of a machine, will take out, in a general way, about half the quantity of flour for fine; yet I think it would be well to have 2 divisions; (N^o 58) below these, because some meal dresses better than others, and when it has been ground ten days or a fortnight, it dresses better than when it is newly ground; and to dress the other half of the flour at the same operation for household bread, the wire work shou'd be N^o 42; but by means of a moveable partition, under the machine, (which I always recommend, see the plan of the machine) you may take two of the first divisions; or three or four, or what you please, and consequently have exactly what quantity or quality you will. The greatest part of the machines which I make for fine flour, for all parts of England, Ireland, &c. are of N^o 54 and 58; and N^o 60 is quite fine enough for Hertfordshire whites. I think I mentioned before, that the number of wires in length and breadth, are always equal to the N^o called. If you please, I will make any machines in any particular manner you choose; and if you want any other directions, in any respect whatsoever, you may freely command,

S I R,

Your most obedient,

humble Servant,

JOHN MILNE.

P. S. If you let Mr. Cooper have the wire work, it will be very right.

Copy.

HENRY PELHAM.

E. N^o 3.*Manchester, the 4th May 1774.*

The honourable Commissioners,

Bought of Milne, Robinson, and Place,

	£.	s.	d.
2 Flour Machines and Packing Cases, at £. 13 each	26	0	0

Gentlemen,

TO your order we have sent as above, which believe will answer the purpose you desire them. The machine you desire, to dress at one operation all the flour, free from bran and pollard, is made of one sort of wire work (N^o 42); that is, there are 42 wires in an inch, and the holes both in length and breadth are geometrical squares; and the weight of six inches square of this wire work is one ounce and one dram. The other machine you desire, to dress two sorts of flour, is composed of wire work as follows; viz. 6 divisions (N^o 54) and 9 divisions (N^o 42); the weight of six inches square of the finest (N^o 54) is just one ounce, and the holes are geometrical squares; the other (N^o 42) you have an account of the weight, &c. above, it being the same fineness of wire work the other machine is composed of. This last machine will, we believe, dress one half of the flour fine, and clear the other from the bran and pollard.

In order that you may distinguish one machine from the other, that machine which is composed of one sort of wire work is marked (A), and the other (B).

Extract.

HENRY PELHAM.

F.

MEMORANDUM.

A Description of the several bolting cloths most commonly used; from an account of Mr. William Mathers, Bolting Cloth Weaver, at Queenhithe, viz.

21s.	Cl th 64 Threads to the	Inch, in the Warp.
	52 Ditto	Ditto, in the Shuttle.
18s.	— 52 Ditto	Ditto, in the Warp.
	44 Ditto	Ditto, in the Shuttle.
16s.	— 44 Ditto	Ditto, in the Warp.
	40 Ditto	Ditto, in the Shuttle.

14s. —	40 Ditto	Ditto, in the Warp.
	36 Ditto	Ditto, in the Shuttle.
13s. —	32 Ditto	Ditto, in the Warp.
	28 Ditto	Ditto, in the Shuttle.
8s. —	17 Ditto	Ditto, in the Warp.
	16 Ditto	Ditto, in the Shuttle.

HENRY PELHAM.

G.

EXPERIMENTS on the Produce of Wheat in Flour, Bran, &c.

1773. Nov. 25.

ONE quarter of new wheat, of 59 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. per bushel	-	474
Produced meal	-	468
Waste in grinding	-	6

Meal as above	-	468
---------------	---	-----

Dressed through a Thirteen Shilling Cloth, produced		
Flour	-	374
Bran	-	92
Waste in dressing	-	1 $\frac{1}{2}$

This flour therefore comes out at the rate of 46 lb. 12 oz. per bushel.

Two quarters of new wheat, at 57 $\frac{1}{2}$ per bushel	-	924
Produced meal	-	909 $\frac{1}{2}$
Waste in grinding	-	14 $\frac{1}{2}$
Meal as above	-	909 $\frac{1}{2}$

Dressed through a Thirteen Shilling Cloth, produced		
Flour	-	708
Bran	-	196
Waste in dressing	-	5 $\frac{1}{2}$

This flour comes out at the rate of 44 lb. 4 oz. per bushel.

REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE, &c.

83

1773. Nov. 29.

	lb.
One quarter of new wheat, at 60 lb. <i>per</i> bushel	480
Produced meal	476
Waste in grinding	4
	<hr/>
Meal as above	476
Dressed through a Thirteen Shilling Cloth, produced	
Flour	383
Bran	92
Waste in dressing	1
	<hr/>

The above comes out at 47 lb. 14 oz. *per* bushel.

ABSTRACT of Four Quarters of Wheat ground, and the dressed through a Thirteen Shilling Cloth.

	lb
From one quarter, of 59 lb. <i>per</i> bushel	374
Two quarters, of 57½ lb ditto	706
One quarter, of 60 lb. ditto	383
	<hr/>
	1465½

Which is at the rate of 45 lb. 12 oz. 12 dr. *per* bushel, an average.

ABSTRACT of the Bran produced from the above Wheat.

From one quarter of wheat, at 59 lb. <i>per</i> bushel	92
Two quarters - at 57½ lb. ditto	196
One quarter - at 60 lb. ditto	92
	<hr/>
	380

Which is at the rate of 11 lb. 11 oz. 14 dr. *per* bushel, an average.

The 1465½ lb. of flour produced as above, upon being dressed again together through,

		Prices of the Cloths.
Produced Households	1003	21 1/2
Seconds	144½	18
Thirds	70	16
Midlings	212	13
Pollard	30	
	<hr/>	

	1459½
Waste in dressing	6
	<hr/>
	1465½

The

REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE, &c.

The above sorts of flour taken all together, and including the pollard, produce at the rate of 45 lb. 9 oz. 4. dr. *per* bushel of wheat.

And without the pollard, at the rate of 44 lb. 12 oz. 10 dr. *per* bushel,

	Pounds.
Wheat, one quarter, of 61 lb. <i>per</i> bushel	448
Produced meal	483½

Loss in grinding	4½
------------------	----

	Pounds.
Meal from the above quarter of wheat	483½

Which being dressed through a Fourteen Shilling Cloth, produced,

Flour	388
Bran	93½
	481½

Loss in dressing	2½
------------------	----

388 lb. of flour come out at the rate of 48 lb. 8 oz. from a bushel of wheat.

N. B. Last year's wheat.

	Pounds.
Wheat, one quarter, of 57 lb. <i>per</i> bushel	456
Produced meal	452½

Loss in grinding	3½
------------------	----

	Pounds.
Meal from the above quarter of wheat	452½

Which, being dressed through a Fourteen Shilling Cloth, produced,

Flour	353½
Bran	96½
	450½

Loss in dressing	2½
------------------	----

353½ lb. of flour come out at the rate of 44 lb. 3 oz. 8 dr. from a bushel of wheat.

N. B. Last year's wheat.

ABSTRACT of the Quantity of Flour produced from the Two Quarters of Wheat before mentioned, dressed through a Fourteen Shilling Cloth.

	Pounds.
From one quarter of wheat, of 61 lb. <i>per</i> bushel	- 388
One quarter of ditto, of 57 lb. <i>per</i> ditto	- 353 $\frac{1}{2}$
Total	- 741 $\frac{1}{2}$

The above flour comes out at the rate of 46 lb. 5 oz. from a bushel of wheat.

The bran from the above wheat was

	Pounds.
From the quarter of 61 lb. to the bushel	- 93 $\frac{1}{2}$
From the quarter of 57 lb. to ditto	- 96 $\frac{1}{2}$
Total	- 190 $\frac{1}{2}$

Which is at the rate of 11 lb. 14 oz. of bran from a bushel of wheat.

The 741 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of flour, which were produced from dressing through a Fourteen Shilling Cloth, upon being dressed again, produced the following particulars; *viz.*

	lb.	Prices of Cloths.
Houfholds, or finest flour	500 $\frac{1}{2}$	21
Seconds	118	18
Thirde	85	16
Middlings	64	14
Pollards	17 $\frac{1}{2}$	
	<u>735$\frac{1}{2}$</u>	
Loss in dressing	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	
	<u>741$\frac{1}{2}$</u>	

The above sorts of flour, including the pollard, come out at 45 lb. 15 oz 8 dr. from a bushel of wheat.

And exclusive of pollard, at 44 lb. 13 oz. 8 dr. from ditto.

Memorandum.

The foregoing account of experiments of the dressing of flour was sent by me to Governor Pownall, and is a true copy of the account which I have of those experiments.

HENRY PELHAM

H. C

H.

OBSERVATIONS relating to BREAD and FLOUR.

IT would be needless to go about to prove, that bread is one of the most important articles amongst our provisions; it being well known, that it constitutes a very considerable part of the aliment of the greatest and most opulent people in this kingdom, and that the poorer sort of our fellow subjects do, at all times, derive the greater part of their subsistence from it.

Our law-givers were so well apprised of this that from the most early times, they took care to ascertain and make known to the people, by means of the tables of assize, the quantity of bread they had a right to expect from the bakers, according to the governing market prices of wheat; and they also very humanely ordained, that bread of different prices should be made from this grain, in order that the poor might be able to procure a sufficient quantity of it, for the support of themselves and their families, at a less price than the rich.

And whoever considers this matter with attention, must soon perceive, that there is nothing which more nearly concerns the generality of the people, than to be so far acquainted with what concerns the article of bread, as to be enabled to judge whether they are supplied therewith agreeable to the directions of the legislature. It is in this persuasion that I venture to submit to the Committee the following facts, states, and observations, as my information, in the best form in which I can lay it before them. As the laws relating to it are but few, I shall go back to the first act for setting an assize on bread, that appears in the printed collection of our statutes, which was in the fifty-first year of Henry the Third, and in the year of our Lord 1266.

By this Act, many sorts of bread from wheat were allowed to be made and sold: but the great length of time which has intervened, renders it more difficult than could be wished, to explain all the particulars relating to them: I shall therefore confine myself to the three following sorts, *viz.* Wastell bread, bread of the whole wheat, and bread treet.

The first of these, that is to say, the Wastell bread, which was the finest of the three, was to weigh as much again as the bread treet, which was the coarsest; and the bread of the whole wheat, which was the middle sort, was to weigh three-fourths of the bread treet. And, by the assize table in the said Act, when wheat was at twelve-pence *per* quarter, the following quantities of the three sorts of bread before-mentioned were to be sold for one farthing, *viz.*

		To weigh.
		℥. s. d.
Wastell bread,	of a farthing,	6 16 0
Bread of the whole wheat,	of ditto	10 7 0
Bread treet.	of ditto	13 12 0

And

And the Act expressly says, "That then a baker, in every quarter of wheat (as is proved by the King's bakers), may gain four pence and the bran, and two loaves for advantage." So that, admitting these two loaves to be farthing loaves, which is the only sort mentioned in the Act, the bread produced from a quarter of wheat at that time (computing from the bread whole wheat) was 517 pounds 6 ounces troy; which is equal to 460 pounds 1 ounce 12 drams avoirdupois, and comes out at the rate of 53 pounds 4 ounces of bread from a bushel of wheat.

It appears further, that the assize of bread was directed by this Act to be set from the middle price of wheat; and as it informs us, that the bakers would gain the bran, and take notice of their bullet (or bolting) among their charges, it is evident that they dressed their own flour, and, except the grinding, were the sole manufacturers of wheat into bread.

This statute contained in force for the long term of five hundred years and upwards, or till the year 1709, which was in the eighth year of the reign of Queen Anne, when it was repealed, and a new one made for regulating the assize and price of bread; the preamble whereof sets forth, "That the before-mentioned Act of Henry the third was expressed in terms so obscure and impracticable in those times, that many doubts and difficulties did daily arise in the construction thereof; whereby little or no observance had in many places been made, either of the due assize, or reasonable price of bread; and that covetous and evil-minded people, taking advantage of the same, had, for their own gain and lucre, deceived and oppressed her Majesty's subjects, and more especially the poorer sort of people."

By this Act of the eighth of Queen Anne, only three sorts of bread were retained and allowed to be made and sold, *viz.* white, wheaten, and household; which were to weigh in proportion to each other, as follows, *viz.* the white, which was the finest, was to weigh half as much as the household, which was the coarsest; and the wheaten, which was the middle sort, was to weigh three-fourths as much as the household: which said proportions correspond exactly with those which the Wastell bread and bread trect, and the bread of the whole wheat under the Act of the 5th of Henry the third were to bear to each other.

And the magistrates, upon the setting the assize under this Act of Queen Anne, were empowered to make a reasonable allowance to the bakers, for their charges, pains, and livelihoods; and the assize table was so formed, as that the quantity of bread which a bushel of wheat was calculated to produce, would yield the baker the market price of the bushel of wheat, and likewise the sum allowed by the magistrates for their charges, pains, and livelihoods.

This will appear very plain, by stating the assize of bread to be set at London, under the said Act, from wheat and baking, at six shillings *per* bushel, *viz.*

The Baker - - - Dr.	Per Contra - - - Cr.
To wheat one bushel - - - 4 6	By 2 twelve-penny loaves of white bread, of 50 lb.
To bakers allowance on ditto, from the magis- trates - - - 1 6	12 oz. 8 dr. each - - 2 0
	By 2 twelpenny loaves of wheaten bread, of 8 lb.
	11 oz. 1 dr. each - - 2 0
	By 2 twelve-penny loaves of household bread, at 11 lb. 9 oz. 6 dr. each 2 0
6 0	6 0

And the said state will also prove, that the weight of bread which the bakers were required to deliver to the public, from a bushel of wheat, under the said Act, was 52 lb. 2 oz. *viz.*

	lb. oz. dr.
Two shillings worth of white bread -	11 4 9
Two shillings worth of wheaten ditto -	17 6 2
Two shillings worth of household ditto	23 2 12
	<u>52 2 2</u>

And any other articles of wheat and baking, in the assize table, will, upon examination, bring out the like proof.

But this Act had one capital defect in it; which was, that it did not require the assize of bread to be set from the middle price of wheat; which seems the more extraordinary, as it was expressly enjoined by the Statute of the 51st of Henry the third, which immediately preceded it: and the want of such a restriction left the magistrates at liberty to set the assize of bread from the highest price of wheat; and it has been publicly asserted, that they actually set the assize in that manner.

However, with this defect in it, the Act continued in force till the year 1757, which was in the 31st year of the reign of King George the second; when (with other Acts, continuing or amending the same) it was repealed, and a new one made for the regulating the assize of bread. The preamble of which doth not point out any particular faults in the aforesaid Act of Queen Anne, but only observes in general, "That it was expedient to reduce into one Act, the several laws then in force relating to the due making, and to the assize of bread; and to make some alterations and amendments therein." And to the intent therefore, that from and after the 29th of September, 1758, a plain and constant rule and method might be duly observed and kept, it was enacted

enacted, that only two sorts of bread should be made for sale, viz. wheaten, and household, otherwise brown bread; and that the household should always be sold one-fourth less than the wheaten.

This will appear by consulting the affize table in any one article of the price of the bushel of wheat and baking; by which it will also be seen, that the quantity or weight of bread required to be delivered to the public, by the bakers, from a bushel of wheat, *Winchester* measure, by this Act, is 52 pounds 2 ounces, calculating one half thereof to be wheaten and the other half household.

For instance: When the price of wheat and baking is seven shillings, one peck and a half of wheaten, and one peck and a half of household bread under this article, which together will weigh 52 pounds 2 ounces, will pay the baker the price of the bushel of wheat, and the 18 pence *per* bushel for the magistrates allowance (at *London*) for his labour, charges, livelihood, and profit, viz.

	Weight.	Price.
	lb. oz.	s. d.
One peck loaf of wheaten bread	17 6 —	2 8
One half peck loaf of ditto	8 11 —	1 4
One peck loaf of household bread	17 6 —	2 0
One half peck loaf of ditto	8 11 —	1 0
	<hr/> 52 2 — <hr/>	<hr/> 7 0 <hr/>

And the same will appear, as far as fractions will allow, if the affized bread, under the said article of wheat and baking, be examined, viz.

WHEATEN BREAD.

	lb. oz. dr.	lb. oz. dr.
One 18 penny loaf	9 12 7	22 2 15
One 12 penny loaf	6 8 4	
One 12 penny ditto	6 8 4	

HOUSEHOLD BREAD.

	lb. oz. dr.	lb. oz. dr.
One 18 penny loaf	13 0 9	30 6 11
One 12 penny ditto	8 11 1	
One 12 penny ditto	8 11 1	

Pence 84 or seven shillings	<hr/> 53 3 10 <hr/>
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And the affize of bread under this Act is ordered to be set from the middle price of wheat, and the magistrates are empowered, as they were under the 8th of Queen Anne, upon setting the affize, to add such a sum to the price of the bushel of wheat

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as they shall deem sufficient for the bakers charges, labour, pains, livelihood, and profit.

In the year 1760, it was contended, that this statute of the 3rd of George the second was less beneficial to the people than that of the 8th of Queen Anne, and a Committee of the honourable the House of Commons were appointed to enquire into the laws relating to the assize of bread; but no alterations were made in them, in consequence of the deliberations of this Committee.

The dearth of corn in the year 1772, occasioned his Majesty, out of his paternal goodness and compassion, to signify to both Houses of Parliament, that he was persuaded, their attention would not be wanting, as far as human wisdom would admit, to alleviate the distresses of the poor; and that they could not gratify him more, than by calling upon him for his concurrence in whatever might contribute to the welfare and happiness of his people. In consequence of which, a Committee of the honourable the House of Commons was again appointed, to examine into the laws relating to the assize of bread: and upon their Report, an Act was passed in that session, by which a middle sort of bread (similar to the wheaten bread under the Act of the 8th of Queen Anne) was resumed, under the name of standard wheaten bread, which was to be made of the flour of wheat, that, without any mixture or division, was to be the whole produce of the grain, the bran or hull excepted, and to weigh three-fourth parts of the wheat from which it should be made; and the said bread was to be sold at one-eighth part less than the wheaten bread in the afore-said Act of the 3rd of George the second, or one-eighth more than the household bread in that Act. And the weight of standard wheaten bread, which is required to be delivered to the public from a bushel of wheat, is fifty-two pounds two ounces.

Upon a review of the several Acts before-mentioned, the weight of bread which the bakers were by them respectively required to deliver to the public, from a bushel of wheat, appears to be as follows, viz.

Weight of bread,
Avoirdupoise, from a
bushel of wheat.

Under what Act.

3rd Henry III. — —
8th Queen Anne — —
3rd George II. — —
8th of his present Majesty

lb.	oz.	dr.
51	2	2
52	2	0
52	2	0
52	2	0

From whence it may be observed, that the bakers were not required, by the Act of Henry the third, to deliver so much bread from a bushel of wheat, as they have been obliged to do by the Acts that have been made since. Yet it is plain (as is humbly apprehended) that a bushel of wheat, at the time of making the said Act of Henry the third, did produce more bread than fifty-two pounds two ounces, which is the quantity the subsequent Acts have required to be delivered to the public. And perhaps, the persons who framed the Acts of the eighth of Queen Anne, and the thirty-first of George the second, by not requiring more than fifty-two pounds two ounces of bread from a bushel of wheat, might have some view to the two loaves for advantage, which (together with the bran) the Act of the fifth of Henry the third expressly says they would gain upon every quarter of wheat, more than by the assize table they were obliged to deliver to the public.

But whether this surmise be well founded or not, is not very material; for it is very certain, that the flour from a bushel of wheat will, on an average, produce more bread than fifty-two pounds two ounces. It is not intended, however, to draw any inference from thence to the prejudice of the bakers. The laws have always considered them as the sole agents to the public for the manufacturing of wheat into bread, and at the same time taken all imaginable care that they should not suffer, but, on the contrary, should be at all times sufficiently paid for working for the Community. For if wheat be ever so dear, they are sure to be paid the market price of it, in the price of the bread. And in that price they also receive the magistrates allowance, which not only includes a reimbursement of the charges of grinding and dressing the wheat into flour, but of all other charges of manufacturing it into bread, and a consideration likewise for their pains, labour, livelihood, and profit. And as the assize of bread is liable to be altered, whenever the price rises or falls three-pence in a bushel; this circumstance renders it needless for them to employ large capitals, and secures them from being injured from the fluctuation of markets, unless they will lay in large stocks of wheat upon speculation, which this variation of the assize is evidently calculated to prevent, and render unnecessary.

In order to render this matter the more plain, I have endeavoured, by the state or account marked (a) in the Appendix, to shew how the case would stand with the Baker at London, if he were to buy his wheat, and bolt it into flour, and bake and sell wheaten and household bread, under the Act of the thirty-first George II. at the present assize of bread at London, which is set from wheat and baking, at six shillings and six-pence per bushel.

And, by another account, marked (b) in the Appendix, I endeavoured to shew the like with respect to standard wheaten bread under the Act of the thirteenth of his present Majesty.

And

And it is humbly apprehended that it will appear from the said accounts, that if the bakers were to carry on their business according to the tenor and design of the laws; that is, by purchasing of wheat and dressing it into flour, which was the method in many people's memory, they might furnish the public with good and genuine bread, of the respective sorts required by the said Act, and be paid what the legislature designs they should receive for their pains, labour, livelihood, and profit.

But the millers (who, till within these late years, had no other part, from time immemorial, in the manufacturing of wheat into bread, than the grinding of wheat into meal for the bakers) are now for the most part become purchasers of wheat, and dressers of it into flour, for sale, upon their own accounts, and, as they are not bound by law, to dress flour of such sorts as are proper for making the respective kinds of bread required by the statutes now in force, nor obliged to sell the flour which they do dress, in proportion to the market price of wheat; the bakers, who are obliged to buy their flour of the mealman, cannot purchase the same so as to enable them to bake and sell any of the sorts of bread, required to be made by the said statutes (except the wheaten bread under the thirty-first of George II.) and to receive the Magistrate's allowance, over and above the prices which they must give for their flour.

The account marked (c) in the Appendix, it is apprehended, will make this very clear, with respect to the Act of the thirty-first of George II. And it is presumed that the account marked (d) in ditto, will do the same with regard to the statute of the thirteenth of his present Majesty.

And as the mealman's profit is a point which it greatly concerns the Community to form an idea of, the account marked (c) in the Appendix, calculated from the present market prices of flour, and average price of wheat, according to the present affize of bread, is humbly apprehended to be a very near estimate thereof.

When the several particulars before-mentioned are considered, it is presumed that the public can be no longer at a loss to know, why so little household bread was made under the Act of the thirty-first of George II. or why the expectations of the legislature have not been answered, with regard to a supply of standard wheaten bread, under the Act of the thirteenth of his present Majesty.

For the millers, contrary to the ancient usage and custom of the realm, having stepped in between the growers of corn and the bakers, and being under no restraint, by law, to sell the same at such prices as to correspond with the market price of wheat, the profits arising to them in this business, must unavoidably occasion an increase of expence upon bread, which must fall upon the community in one shape or other. And the way in which this encroachment on the bakers' trade has hitherto operated, has been by depriving the people of the advantage of being furnished

With

with the proportion of household bread intended by the legislature.

And it will doubtless be a matter of great surprise to the generality of the people, when they come to find what an immense sum this loss has amounted to: for, if one fourth part of the proportion of household bread should be supposed to have been made, during the continuance of the Act of the thirty-first of George III. yet, under this supposition, the cities of London and Westminster will be found, upon a moderate computation, to have suffered (together) the annual loss, upon an average of one hundred and thirty-five thousand pounds; and the people of the other parts of England and Wales, who are computed to eat bread made of wheat, the yearly loss of four hundred, twenty-one thousand eight hundred and seventy-five pounds; so that within the space of sixteen years, which is the time the said Act has been in force, the injury which hath arisen to the Community by its not being complied with, appears, by the state marked (f) in the Appendix, to amount in the whole to eight millions nine hundred and ten pounds. And what makes it infinitely more to be regretted, is, that this enormous sum has, for the most part, been forced out of the pockets of the working and industrious poor, by obliging them to purchase wheaten bread, through the want of household or *brown* bread, having been made to supply them, as was intended by the legislature.

In order to prevent so capital an evil for the future, it is humbly apprehended, that if the bakers are to continue under the necessity of buying their flour from the mealmen, the latter should be obliged by law to dress flour under the same denominations as the respective sorts of bread, directed to be made by the statutes now in force, and no other; and be also obliged to sell the several sorts of flour at certain fixed prices, to be governed by, and calculated from the market price of wheat, in order to enable the bakers that buy their flour, to make and sell the respective sorts of bread, according to the prices set from wheat in the assize table.

It is likewise apprehended, that the law should describe what sort of flour each sort of bread should be made of; and also, in what manner each sort of flour should be dressed: by which means the public would know the quality of the bread they ought to have for their money, and be enabled to procure redress, if imposed upon therein, as they can do at present if defrauded in weight by the help of the assize table.

To explain this more fully, it is necessary to observe, that the following are the sorts of flour that have hitherto been generally dressed from wheat, by the mealmen, *viz.*

Households.

Seconds.

Thirds.

Middlings.

Which

Which said sorts of flour are dressed through the different sorts of bolting cloths following, *viz.*

		<i>Dressed through</i>
The Households	—	a 21 shilling cloth.
Seconds	—	an 18 shilling cloth.
Thirds	—	a 16 shilling cloth.
Middlings	—	a 13 shilling cloth.

But as the Acts of Parliament now in force, require the under-mentioned sorts of bread to be made, *viz.* wheaten bread, standard wheaten bread, and household, or *brown* bread; it is humbly apprehended, that no flour should be allowed to be sold, but under the proper denominations for making those sorts of bread; that is to say;

		<i>For making</i>
Best wheaten flour	—	Wheaten bread.
Standard wheaten flour	—	Standard wheaten bread.
Household flour	—	Household or <i>brown</i> bread.

And that their respective qualities and manner of dressing should be ascertained and described, as shall be found right by experiments: and that the nature and texture of the bolting cloths through which it may be found proper, the said sorts of flour should be dressed, should be particularly and clearly described.

And as many people have, of late, come into the method of dressing of flour through bolting machines made of wire, instead of cloths, it will be necessary also to ascertain the different degrees of fineness the wirework of such machines must be of, to dress flour of the denominations before mentioned.

It is also apprehended that all millers should be obliged to grind wheat for the bakers, when required, at the accustomed toll, or price, and likewise for all private persons; as it might, among other advantages, revive a custom of the utmost consequence to the industrious labouring people employed in agriculture, who formerly used to be supplied with wheat from the farmers for whom they worked, which being ground at mill, they afterwards dressed into flour through sieves at home, and baked it into bread there; by which means it came to them at a much cheaper rate than buying it of the bakers, or by purchasing flour of mealmen, or bakers, to bake into bread themselves.

HEN. PELHAM.

THE APPENDIX.

(a)

AN ACCOUNT, shewing on what Terms a Baker at London (who has his Wheat) may make and sell wheaten and household

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or *brown* Bread, under the Act of the thirty-first George II. according to the present Affize of Bread set at London, from Wheat and Baking, at 6s. 6d. *per* Bushel.

N.B. The magistrates allowance at London to the baker, is 18d. on a bushel of wheat; so that when they set the affize of bread, from wheat and baking at 6s. 6d. *per* bushel, they must deem the average market price of wheat to be 5s. *per* bushel, or 40s. *per* quarter; on which principle the account will stand as follows, *viz.*

The Baker	Dr.	Per Contra.	Cr.
	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
To 5 quarters of wheat at 40s. <i>per</i> quarter	10 0 0	By 60 peck loaves of wheaten bread, at 2s. 6d. each	7 10 0
To the Magistrates allowance to the baker for grinding and dressing, and all other charges, and for his pains, livelihood, and profit, at 18d. <i>per</i> bushel, or 12s. <i>per</i> quarter of wheat	3 0 0	By 60 peck loaves of household bread, at 1s. 10d. each	5 10 0
	£ 13 0 0		£ 13 0 0

Memorandum. The above 120 peck loaves are all that the law requires the baker to deliver, under the Act of the thirty-first George II. from 5 quarters, or 40 bushel of wheat; and they pay him for his wheat, and the Magistrates allowance of 12 shillings *per* quarter for grinding and dressing, &c. and for his pains, livelihood, and profit.

To this allowance of 12 shillings *per* quarter, must be added the value of the brian and pollard, which at this time is at least 3s. 11d. *per* quarter.

Besides this, it must be observed, that 42 pounds of flour will make the whole quantity of bread required to be delivered to the public from a bushel of wheat; so that whatever quantity of flour the wheat may yield above 42 pounds from a bushel, the surplus must be considered as an additional profit to the baker, as it enables him to make a proportionable quantity of bread from a bushel of wheat, more than the law requires of him.

If only two pounds and a quarter of flour extraordinary were to be obtained from a bushel of wheat, the value thereof in bread at this time, would be something above 2s. on a quarter of wheat.

after deducting 5½ pence for every peck of bread for the Magistrates allowance to the baker.

(b)

Nowing on what Terms a Baker at London may make and sell Standard Wheaten bread under the Act of the Thirteenth of his present Majesty, according to the present Assize of Bread at London, set from Wheat and Baking at 6s. 6d. per bushel.

N.B. The Magistrates allowance at London to the baker, is 1s. 6d. per bushel; so that when they set the assize of bread, from wheat and baking at 6s. 6d. per bushel, they must deem the average market price of wheat to be 5s. per bushel, or 40s. per quarter; on which principle, the account will stand as follow, viz.

The Baker ——— Dr.	Per Contra. ——— Cr.
£ s. d.	£ s. d.
To 5 quarters of wheat, at 40s. per quarter 10 0 0	By 120 peck loaves of standard wheaten bread, at 2s. 2d. each, being $\frac{1}{8}$ th less than the wheaten bread under the Act of the 31st Geo. II. according to the present assize 13 0 0
To the Magistrates allow- ance to the baker for grinding, dressing, and all other charges, and for his pains, liveli- hood, and profit, at 18d. per bushel, or 12s. per quarter of wheat — 3 0 0	
£ 13 0 0	£ 13 0 0

Memorandum. The above 120 peck loaves are all that the baker is required to deliver, under the Act of the 13th of his present Majesty; and they pay him for his wheat, and the Magistrates allowance of 12 shillings per quarter for grinding and dressing, for his pains, livelihood, and profit.

To this allowance of 12 shillings per quarter, must be added the value of the bran and pollard, which at this time is at least 3s. 11d. per quarter.

Besides this, it is to be observed, that 42 pounds of flour will make the whole quantity of bread required to be delivered to the public from a bushel of wheat; so that whatever quantity of flour the

the wheat may yield above 42 pounds from a bushel, the surplus must be considered as an additional profit to the baker, by enabling him to make a proportionable quantity of bread from a bushel of wheat, more than the law requires of him.

And if only two pounds and a quarter of flour extraordinary were to be obtained from a bushel of wheat, the value thereof in bread at this time would be something above two shillings on a quarter of wheat, after deducting 6d. for every peck of bread for the magistrates allowance to the baker.

Memorandum. It appears by the foregoing account, that the baker can purchase flour at the present market price to make wheaten bread, and receive the price set thereon by the affize, besides the magistrates allowance for his charges, pains, livelihood and profit :

But that he cannot buy flour to enable him to make household bread, so as to receive one third even of the magistrates allowance, over and above the price he must give for the flour.

N. B. 5l. 6s. 2½d. for 840 pounds of flour for household bread, is at the rate of 33s. 4½d. *per* sack of 280 pounds.

(d.)

An ACCOUNT, shewing on what Terms a Baker at London (who is obliged to buy his Flour) can make and sell Standard Wheaten Bread, under the Act of the Thirteenth of his present Majesty, at the present Market Prices of Flour, and Affize of Bread, at London, set from Wheat and Baking at Six Shillings and Six-pence *per* Bushel.

The Baker	Dr.	Per Contra	Cr.
£. s. d.			£. s. d.
To 120 Peck Loaves of Standard Wheaten Bread, at 2s. 2d. each, according to the above Affize.	13 0 0	By 1,680 Pounds, or 6 Sacks of 280 Pounds each, of Flour (being the Proportion to make 120 Loaves of Bread at the Rate of 14 Pounds of Flour to a Peck Loaf) of the several Sorts, Quantities, and Prices, described in the foregoing Account, marked (c); viz.	
		Pounds. <i>per</i> Sack	£. s. d.
		Households, 1080 at 4os. 7 14 3½	
		Seconds, 215 at 37s. 1 8 4½	
		Thirde, 96 at 34s. 0 11 7½	
		Middlings, 289 at 25s. 1 5 9½	
		Which being thrown together compose the Whole Flour of the Wheat, and amount to	
		By the Baker's Profit	1 19 10½
	£. 13 0 0		£. 13 0 0

Memorandum. 120 Peck Loaves of Bread are all that the Baker is required by Law to deliver from Five Quarters of Wheat, or 1,680 Pounds of Flour. But it is plain, from the foregoing Account, that the Baker cannot buy 1,680 Pounds of the Whole Flour

Flour of the Wheat, or Standard Wheaten Flour, at the present Market Prices, on such Terms as to receive the Magistrates Allowance for Baking, over and above the Price he must give for the Flour: For, instead of £3. he will receive only £ 1. 19s. 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ d.

(c.)

A COMPUTATION of the Mealman's Profit, at the present Market Prices of Flour at London, and the average Market Price of Wheat, according to the present Assize of Bread.

N.B. The magistrates allowance at London to the baker, is 1s. 6d. on a bushel of wheat, and at the present assize of bread is set from wheat and baking at 6s. 6d. *per* bushel, they must deem the average price of wheat to be 5s. *per* bushel or 40s. *per* quarter; on which principle the account will stand as follows, *viz.*

The Mealman — Dr.	Per Contra. — Cr.
	lb. £ s. d.
To five quarters of wheat, at 40 <i>per</i> quarter — 10 0 0	By 1,080 of household, or finest flour, at 40s. <i>per</i> sack 7 14 3 $\frac{1}{4}$
To grinding and dressing the said wheat, at 3s. <i>per</i> quarter 0 15 0	By - 215 of seconds, at 37s. <i>per</i> do. - 1 8 4 $\frac{1}{4}$
To mealman's profit 1 4 8	By - 96 of thirds, at 34s. <i>per</i> do. 0 11 7 $\frac{1}{2}$
	By - 289 of middlings, at 25s. <i>per</i> do. 1 5 9 $\frac{1}{4}$
	1,680
	By the bran and pollard from five quarters of wheat, at 3s. 11d. <i>per</i> quarter — 0 19 7
£ 11 19 8	£ 11 19 8

N.B. The above computation is made upon the supposition that the produce of flour is only 336 pounds from a quarter of 42 pounds from a bushel; which last quantity is the make three pecks of bread, which is all that the of George II. and the 13th of his present Majesty delivered, from a bushel of wheat.

But it must be observed, that wheat in general will yield more than 42 pounds of flour from a bushel, and whatever the surplus may be, must be considered as an additional profit to the mealman.

And if only two pounds and a quarter of flour extraordinary were to be obtained from a bushel of wheat, the value thereof at this time would be two shillings and four-pence farthing upon a quarter of wheat,

(f.)

A COMPUTATION of the Loss, which hath arisen to the Community, by the Proportion of household Bread not having been made, that was intended by the Act of the 31st of George II.

BY the said Act, the flour from the wheat, is calculated to be made half into wheaten, and half into household bread; the latter to be sold one fourth cheaper than the former.

The cities of London and Westminster are computed to consist of 600,000 people; and every person is calculated to consume one quarter of wheat in a year, in bread; so that the yearly consumption of wheat in the said cities has been estimated at 600,000 quarters.

By the said table in the said Act, one bushel of wheat is computed to produce three peck loaves of bread; consequently a quarter of wheat is deemed to make twenty-four peck loaves of bread.

Therefore, 600,000 quarters of wheat should produce 7,200,000 peck loaves of wheaten, and 7,200,000 peck loaves of household bread; and, as the said Act hath not been lower, upon an average, during the continuance of the said Act, than 1s. 11d. for the peck loaf wheaten, and 1s. 5d. for the peck loaf household, the public, from 600,000 quarters of wheat, ought to have been supplied yearly with

	N ^o	s.	d.	£
Peck loaves, wheaten	7,200,000	at	1 11	each 690,000
Peck loaves, household	7,200,000	at	1 5	each 510,000
	<u>14,400,000</u>			<u>£1,200,000</u>

It is, however, generally acknowledged, that the people have been supplied with but very little household bread under that Act; but if it should, for argument sake, be supposed that one fourth part of the proportion thereof (*viz.* 1,800,000 peck loaves) hath been made yearly; yet, under this supposition, the inhabitants of the said cities, by being obliged to purchase 5,400,000 peck loaves of wheaten bread, instead of being furnished

nished with the remaining three parts of 7,200,000 peck loaves household bread, will be found to have suffered an annual loss of 135,000*l.* as *per* the following account, *viz.*

A COMPUTATION of the Expence of Bread for one Year for the Cities of London and Westminster.

Peck loaves.		<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>	<i>£</i>
To 7,200,000	of wheaten bread —	at	1 11	690,000
To 5,400,000	{ of ditto, purchased for want of the due quantity of house- hold bread being made }	at	ditto	517,500
To 1,800,000	{ of household bread, sup- posed to be made — }	at	1 5	127,503
<u>14,400,000</u>				<u>£1,335,000</u>

The said cities, from 600,000 quarters of wheat, ought to have been furnished with 7,200,000 peck loaves wheaten, and with ditto number household; which at the above prices, would have come to ——— 1,200,000

Loss to these cities, by not being furnished with the due proportion of household bread ——— 135,000

The rest of the people of England and Wales, who are computed to use bread made of wheat, are calculated to be in number 3,750,000; and supposing them to be circumstanced like those in London and Westminster, their loss, by not being supplied with household bread, stated in the same manner as for those cities, must have amounted to £.843,750 *per annum*.

But as some farmers, and other persons in the country, may probably have their own wheat ground, and dress the flour at home, and bake their own bread, some abatement of course ought to be made on that account; and, in order not to exaggerate matters, let it be supposed that half the said 3,750,000 people buy their own wheat, and bake their own bread; which will reduce the loss from £.843,750 to the yearly sum of £.421,875; and in such case the total computed loss to the community, by not being supplied with household bread, according to the intention of the aforesaid Act of the thirty-first George II. will stand as follows, *viz.*

Loss

Loss to the cities of London and Westminster, for 16 years at £.135,000 <i>per annum</i>	£.	2,160,000
Loss to the people of the other parts of England and Wales, for 16 years, at £.421,875 <i>per annum</i>		6,750,000
Total	£.	8,910,000

I.

EXPERIMENTS made by T. Farrer, Esq. Layton Stone, Essex.

Three quarters wheat, which, according to the present method of dressing for wheaten bread, produce 60 peck loaves.

1773.		£.	s.
23d March.	3 Qrs. wheat cost 55s. <i>per quarter</i>	8	5
	Charges to the mill, 1s. <i>per quarter</i>	3	0
	Grinding and dressing, 3s <i>per quarter</i>	0	9
		£.	8 17

	C. qrs. lb.
The above 3 quarters produced	10 1 8 flour.
	2 1 14 bran.
By grinding and dressing	0 1 20 waste.
Weight of the wheat	13 0 14
being at 61½ pounds <i>per bushel</i> .	

Now the above 10 C. 1qr. 8lb. household flour at 14 pounds to the peck loaf, render } 82 8 pounds.
 So that in three quarters of wheat there is gained, in aid of the consumption of bread, 22 peck loaves and eight pounds.

Three quarters of wheat, which, according to the present method of dressing, for wheaten bread, render 60 peck loaves.

1772.		£.	s.
30th March.	3 Qrs. wheat cost 50s. <i>per quarter</i>	7	10
	Charges to the mill, dressing, and grinding	0	12
		£.	8 2

		C. qrs. lb.
The above wheat produced	9 3 10 flour.	
	2 1 14 bran.	
	0 1 20 waste.	
	<hr/>	
Weight of the wheat — —	12 2 16	
being at 59 pounds <i>per</i> bushel.	<hr/>	

Peck
Loaves.

Now the above 9 C. 3 qrs. 10lb. household flour, at 14 pounds to the peck-loaf, render } 78 10 pounds.
So that in three quarters of wheat, at 59 pounds *per* bushel, there is gained, in aid of the consumption of bread, 18 peck loaves and ten pounds.

Queen Anne's wheaten bread, produced at the honourable House of Commons, by Thomas Farrar, 15th November, 1772.

Made from two bushels of meal, weighing. 112 pounds; which produced,

Flour — —	89 pounds.
Bran — —	21 pounds.
Waste — —	2 pounds.
	<hr/>
	112

Peck
Loaves.

The 112 pounds, Queen Anne's wheaten bread, render, at 14 pounds the peck } 6 5 pounds.

According to the present mode of dressing the wheaten bread, they would render no more than five peck loaves :

So that there is gained, in aid of the consumption of bread, in two bushels Queen Anne's wheaten flour, which is the true household flour, one peck loaf five pounds.

K.

NARRATIVE of Proceedings and Experiments by Sir George Young, Baronet.

IN Pursuance of the Act of Parliament, passed the last session, empowering Justices of the Peace, and other proper Magistrates, to prohibit, for a limited time, any bread to be made of a finer quality than that which was, in the Act, called Standard Wheaten; the Justices of the Peace for the county of Devon, and the Magistrates of the county of the city of Exeter, resolved to issue a prohibition in pursuance of the said Act; and, at the last Michaelmas

was quarter sessions, gave the necessary orders accordingly; which orders have been carried into execution, and enforced from time to time, ever since.

The extensive county of Devon, though universally a corn country, and for the most part of it well cultivated, being entirely an enclosed country, except in the neighbourhood of the forests or mountains of Ex-Moor and Dartmoor, is notwithstanding, ill supplied with flour; the number of mealmen, flour men, and flour mills, being but few, for particular reasons; so that a great part of the corn grown within the county is exported to the counties from whence they are supplied with flour; chiefly Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. The sorts of flour supplied from thence at the time Magistrates issuing the above orders of sessions, were what is called, firsts, seconds, and thirds, with some middlings. Upon issuing those orders, the bakers and others, throughout the county, directed their correspondents to send them only the flour proper for making the standard wheaten bread, except such flour as was still wanted for penny and two-penny loaves, which were still allowed: these directions were complied with, and in consequence of them, the flour sent was of the sort called firsts, and what was called by the name of Parliament flour, which turns out to be a sort nearly corresponding to seconds, though something inferior, but much superior to thirds.

Thus the county was supplied with proper flour, in obedience to the order of sessions. Another consequence soon followed: The millers and flour men within the county changed their bolting cloths. At the time of making the order the bolting cloths at the several flour mills, were chiefly of the sorts which were sold at Exeter for 16s. 19s. 20s. 21s. 22s. and as far as 24s. the general run was about 21s. Immediately upon the orders being issued, these cloths were changed for 14s. cloths, which were found to be the cloths that would the nearest give the flour which should weigh three-fourths of the bushel of wheat without any mixture, or other division: the other cloths were laid aside, and have continued so ever since. The cloths thus adopted, instead of the former, were likewise found to contain by the warp and woof about 30 threads by 32 in an inch square. With these cloths, the millers and flourmen, in general, dressed the flour ready for the use of the bakers, in compliance with the order of session; but in some parts it was not regarded.

At Christmas 1773, the Magistrates of the county of Devon, and of the county of the city of Exeter, renewed their former order; at which time the following experiment was made at Escott, in presence of three Justices of the Peace, a miller, who kept a flour mill, a baker, and a farmer; and it was intended to try what sort of bread would be made, in pursuance of the Act of Parliament, and what quantity of flour might be produced from a bushel of wheat, dressed in a proper cloth pursuant to the order of session.

A bushel of wheat was taken from some tithe corn grown in the neighbourhood, and collected in kind; which, being the mixed produce of several sorts of land, was chosen as the fair test of the produce of the crop: the bushel of corn, being eight gallons, weighed 59 pounds 8 ounces (troy). After being weighed, it was sent to the mill to be ground; and, in order to have the full weight, the miller was paid in money for his toll. N. B. The usual price for grinding a bushel of wheat there, was 4d.; but, in order to encourage the miller to do justice, he had 6d. given him. The corn thus ground, was returned back with little or no waste, that could be perceived, at least none to any amount: it was then dressed through a fourteen shilling cloth or sieve; and the produce in flour, exclusive of the coarse pollard and bran, was exactly 44 pounds 10 ounces, being three-fourths of the weight of the bushel of wheat, or very near it.

This 44 pounds 10 ounces of flour was then made up into dough, mixed with it water, salt, and yeast; and the dough was baked into four loaves, as nearly equal in weight as possible; and the whole flour, thus being made into dough, being suffered to ferment, and rise, by the ingredients mixed with it, was found to weigh, before baking, nearly 70 pounds; after baking, the dough, thus formed into bread, was decreased in its weight again, so that the four loaves of bread weighed exactly the same weight as the whole bushel of corn before it was ground.

N. B. In making the dough, a quart of good yeast was used, and a proper quantity of salt and water. It is likewise observable, that the better the quality of the corn or flour, the more water must be used to make the dough.

The bread produced by this experiment was an exceeding good, white, pleasant, and nutritious bread: and what is remarkable, kept longer and better than the common sort of bread bought of the baker.

After this, the coarse flour and pollard, or bran, weighing 14 pounds 10 ounces, was, out of curiosity, dressed again, and reduced to something more than nine pounds, leaving nothing but the plain bran: this coarse flour being likewise made into dough, and baked, produced a loaf of bread, weighing about 13 pounds eight ounces; and the bread produced by this experiment was a very good brown bread, though coarse.

N. B. The miller said, that the bran which remained, was worth about 4d. at the country market.

From these experiments it certainly appeared, that the standard wheaten bread, made of flour, dressed through a 14 shilling cloth, is an exceeding good, wholesome and nutritious bread; much superior to what is commonly used by the poorer classes of people in most towns and cities, and even than in the city of London, and far beyond what is used by the poor people in the country.

It likewise appeared, that the standard wheaten bread cannot be ascertained, without the concurrence of the miller and flourman, as well as the baker.

It likewise appeared, and was proved, by the experience of the gentlemen present, and confessed by the miller who attended the experiments, that a greater proportion of the real produce of a bushel of corn was rendered applicable to the purpose of food, than any other way; and the miller, in particular, said, that he had not had occasion to buy so much corn, by one half, since the order of session; which had then continued from Michaelmas to Christmas, to supply the same number of customers, as he did before.

It likewise appeared, that the baker, or even any poor person, might, by the assistance of a sieve made of a 14 shilling cloth, obtain a flour fit to make the standard wheaten bread, if they could but oblige, or prevail on the miller to grind the corn; there being no difficulty in the process. Indeed it likewise appeared, upon enquiry, that the generality of the poorer sort of people, in that part of the kingdom, did, when they could, get their corn ground at the grist mills, and then dressed the whole through a cloth, or sieve, which did not divide, or separate, above eight pounds of coarse pollard and bran from the bushel, and thus made a good brown bread; and if the use of hand-mills were established, this would be more practised in the country.

It likewise appeared, that any given quantity of flour did, in general, gain one-fourth of its weight upon being made into bread: so that flour weighing three fourths of a bushel of corn, will bake into exactly the weight of the whole bushel; and flour which weighs little more than half the bushel of corn, will make into bread which will weigh three-fourths of the bushel: supposing, therefore, the bushel of corn to weigh, as it may fairly be stated to do, about sixty pounds, forty-five pounds weight of flour will make just sixty pounds weight of bread; and about thirty-four pounds weight of flour will make just forty-five pounds weight of bread; and so in proportion for any greater or less quantity, supposing the bread to be made of standard flour, that is, of flour being the whole produce of the corn. Thus too it appears, that if a bushel of corn weighs sixty pounds, and the price is forty shillings *per* quarter, that is exactly one penny *per* pound; and, if standard wheaten bread were then sold for one penny *per* pound, likewise, forty-five pounds weight of flour, made into bread, would exactly produce the value of the bushel, or quarter of corn, with a very considerable profit to the miller and baker.

Upon the whole, the proceedings of the county of Devon and city of Exeter, followed since by other counties, prove clearly, that in times of scarcity, or dearth of corn, it may be extremely proper for the Magistrates to enforce the use of the standard wheaten bread; and that they should be required in such cases, to enforce it: but this cannot be enforced, without putting the

millers, mealmen, and flourmen, under proper regulations; who, for want of it, have stood between the bounty of heaven and the poor consumer; nor is there the least doubt, but the loss of the people, thereby, in food and treasure, has been exceedingly great. The experiments as above related, and likewise to shew, that the flour may be ascertained, tend the bread made with very great ease and advantage to private families, and with very sufficient profit and encouragement both to miller and baker; but that it is unjust to the baker, to leave him, as he is at present, at the mercy of the miller, by a partial regulation; and that the provisions of the late Act of Parliament cannot completely benefit the consumer, without extending them to the miller, mealman, and flourman, as well as to the baker.

L.

EXPERIMENTS and OBSERVATIONS on Flour and Bread, delivered to the Committee by Dr. Irving.

TO grind wheat into flour with the greatest advantage, the mill-stone should make about sixty revolutions in a minute: if faster, the stones acquire too much heat, and give a burnt taste to the meal: if slower, a part of it adheres firmly to the bran or husk, and cannot be separated in the bolting.

Flour, when kept some time, evaporates a part of its moisture, becomes less adhesive and clammy, loses somewhat of its agreeable taste, and imbibes a greater portion of water in the making of it into dough: the bread of it appears smoother in the cutting, whiter in the grain, dries sooner, and becomes more crumbly, than the bread of new flour. These reasons induce the baker to prefer old flour to new in the making of bread.

The yeast of porter does not raise bread so perfectly as that produced from small beer; besides, it is very bitter to the taste: the baker, therefore, in London, instead of using a sufficient quantity of yeast from the leavening of his bread, mixes only a small portion of it with flour and water, made to the consistence of a syrup, called *Sponge*; which, when fermented, is added to the flour; and being worked up together into dough, the whole mass is suffered to ferment.

This method, however, of leavening the dough, is by no means so good as that in which yeast only is used; as it gives the bread a sour taste, frequently perceptible in that of London. I find by experiment, ~~three~~ two pounds and half of flour kept a year in a dry place, requires two pounds of water to make it into dough, and loses in the baking into bread ten ounces; but from the variable age, dryness, and quality of the flour, with the indeterminate degrees of kneading and baking, it is impossible to ascertain

tain the exact proportion of water in all cases; nor is in any uniform proportion ever observed by the bakers.

Flour made from heated or damaged corn does not thoroughly mix with water, so as to form a perfect dough, unless a small portion of alum be added. In this case the baker is induced to use it; as he may be likewise when the water with which he makes the dough is very muddy; alum having the property of purifying it. I find, however, by the experiment of dissolving the salt from bread and water, and adding to the solution an alkali (which would discover the earth of alum by precipitation) that the bakers in London very seldom use alum; but substitute hard pump water, with an extraordinary quantity of common salt; which in some measure, answer their purpose, in the working of damaged flour.

Flour or bread, freed of its salt, being burnt in a crucible, leaves behind only a very small portion of earth; but if chalk, lime, whiting, bone, ash or any calcareous substance, be mixed with either, these foreign ingredients will remain unconsumed in the crucible, and the quantity may be perfectly ascertained.

The mixture of these ingredients with flour or bread may also be discovered, by adding spirit of salt well diluted with water; and their quantity known by precipitation with a fixed alkali. The following Experiments were made with a view of ascertaining these facts.

EXPERIMENT 1st.

One pound of fine flour burnt in a crucible, left behind twenty-eight grains of earth; of which nineteen were sandy matter; the remainder soluble in an acid.

EXPERIMENT 2d.

One pound of bread of a quarter loaf, freed of its salt by water, and treated in the same manner, gave forty-three grains; of which twenty-nine were sandy matter, the rest soluble by an acid.

EXPERIMENT 3d.

One pound of bread added to spirit of salt, sufficiently diluted with distilled water, gave scarce any precipitation of earth, by adding a fixed alkali.

From these and other chemical trials, several times repeated, with flour and bread procured in many parts of London and Westminster, the result was nearly the same; except the coarse flour and bread contained a few grains more of earthly matter. It evidently appears, therefore, that no frauds were practised in the above samples.

The defects of the London bread seem to be owing to the following causes:

1st. That

1st. The use of old flour in preference to new, which gives the bread a less savoury taste.

2d. The employing sponge instead of yeast; which generally gives a sour, unpalatable taste to the bread.

3d. Not kneading it sufficiently, but, in place of that labour, using too great quantity of water, which makes the bread heavy and unpleasant.

CHARLES IRVING.

[III]

REPORT

[Made upon the 21st Day of December, 1772.]

FROM THE

COMMITTEE, &c.

Ordered to be Re-printed the 9th of November, 1795.

The COMMITTEE appointed to examine the several Laws now in being relative to the Assize of Bread.

THE Committee appointed to examine the several laws now in being relative to the assize of bread, and to report the same, together with their opinion thereupon, to the House, have, in obedience to the orders of this House, examined all the laws respecting the assize of bread.

They have also (as far as the Journals of the House could afford them information) examined the proceedings of this House on this subject.

Your Committee have examined several evidences, from the several branches of this business; *viz.* the corn factor, the mealman, and the baker. And,

Your Committee do find, that from time immemorial, and in all times, to the thirty-first year of the reign of George the Second, there was in all assize tables, made under the law, a wheaten bread made of flour the whole produce of the wheat, the said flour weighing, at an average, three fourths of the weight of the wheat whereof it was made.

Your Committee are informed, and do find, That such flour doth contain the whole nutrition or sustenance of the wheat; and that such is the best medium standard, and the most proper, which can be introduced, for bread in common use.

That, in the thirty-first year of the reign of George the Second an Act passed, intituled, "An Act for the due making of bread," and to regulate the price and assize thereof, and to punish "persons who shall adulterate meal, flour, or bread; wherein, amongst other matters, it is directed, that, where an assize shall be set, no other sort or sorts of bread except the wheaten and household, as set in the tables annexed to the said Act, should be made or sold, under a penalty expressed in the said Act.

Which

Which sorts of bread, although there be no specific description of them in the said Act, nor any such description to be collected from the said tables, are holden forth to us to be made by a division of the flour, (representing the whole wheat) into two parts; the wheaten bread intended by that Act being supposed to be made of the finer half, and the household bread to be made of the coarser half.

That the wheaten bread made of the flour (representing the whole of the wheat) which had from time immemorial been set and stood in all assize tables heretofore made, and was the basis and standard of all, was by this last mentioned Act excluded and prohibited from being made and sold.

Your Committee do find that this Act has never been, from the time of passing the same, nor is at this day, in actual operation, according to the true intent and meaning thereof: that the flour is not in fact so divided, nor the bread so made as is described: that very little household bread whatsoever is made: that no household bread, such as is supposed and was intended by the Act, is made: that the wheaten bread which is made and sold, is not the wheaten bread intended by that Act.

That in consequence of the old standard wheaten bread being excluded, while the law, directing other sorts to be made, is found not to operate in practice, great confusions and many inconveniences have arisen, and do exist; and amongst others, the market hath been prevented from being supplied, in times of scarcity, with a bread made of such flour as the law permitted to be imported for that purpose.

That your Committee; considering these consequences and effects of the quitting the old medium standard wheaten bread made as above described, do find, that if that standard bread made of flour, which is the whole produce of the wheat, the said flour weighing, on an average, three fourths of the weight of the wheat whereof it is made, was again introduced under certain regulations and restrictions, it would tend to prevent the said confusions, and to remedy the said inconveniences: and your Committee find, that the columns calculated for the wheaten bread, in the now repealed assize tables of the Act of the 8th of Ann, would be the proper assize for the said bread; and will have this further benefit and advantage, that when wheat (the baker's allowance included) is at seven shillings the bushel, the wheaten twelve-penny loaf of this standard bread would contain 7 lb. 7 oz. 3 dr. of bread, whereas the twelve-penny wheaten loaf, according to the assize of George the Second, doth contain only 6 lb. 8 oz. 4 dr. and so in the like proportion.

Although your Committee may apprehend that, within the cities of London and Westminster, and within the markets dependant upon, and connected with the same, some inconveniences might arise, if the magistrate, whenever he should direct this standard wheaten bread to be made, and to set an assize thereon, should

should for the present be permitted to prohibit the wheaten now in use from being made and sold, or omit to set an assize thereon: yet they do not find, that, when and where, in any other parts of the kingdom, the magistrate shall set an assize upon, and direct this standard bread to be made, any inconvenience could arise, if there was no assize set for any bread of a finer sort, nor any such permitted to be made without a licence. On the other hand, they find that, in order not to enhance the price of bread upon any persons who are used, or should be willing to be supplied with bread of an inferior and cheaper sort than the said standard bread, the bakers shall be at liberty to bake and sell the said inferior sort, of bread, provided they be restrained by severe penalties from selling, at the price of standard bread, any bread which shall not come up to the full standard in its composition.

Upon the whole, your Committee came to the following resolutions:

Resolved,

That it is the opinion of this Committee, that if the Magistrates were by law permitted (when and where they shall think fit to set an assize on bread) to introduce again, under certain regulations and restrictions, the old standard bread made of flour, which is the whole produce of the wheat, the said flour weighing, on an average, three fourths of the weight of the wheat whereof it is made, it would tend to prevent many inconveniences which have arisen in the assize and making of bread for sale.

Resolved,

That it is the opinion of this Committee, that the columns calculated for the wheaten bread, in the now repealed tables of the Act of the 8th of Queen Anne, intituled, "An Act to regulate the Price and Assize of Bread," would be the proper assize for said standard wheaten bread: and that the twelve-penny loaf of this standard wheaten bread, containing the whole flour of the wheat (the said flour weighing, on an average, three fourths of the weight of the said wheat) would, upon a medium, contain one pound of bread in eight more than the twelve-penny loaf of the present wheaten bread made under the Act of the 31st of George the Second.

FIRST REPORT

FROM THE

SELECT COMMITTEE, &c.

Ordered to be printed 26th Nov. 1845.

The SELECT COMMITTEE appointed to take into Consideration the present high Price of Corn, and to collect Evidence relative thereto, and to report the same, from time to time, as it shall appear to them, to the House, with their Observations thereupon;

PROCEEDED, in the first instance, to consider such information as had been already collected concerning the same.

They examined, for this purpose, the minutes of the evidence taken before the Lords of his Majesty's Privy Council, upon this subject. They received from Sir John Sinclair, one of the Members of the Committee, the substance of such accounts of the state of the late crop of grain, as the correspondence of the Board of Agriculture had enabled them, at the present period, to collect. They had further the opportunity of receiving from many of their members a statement of facts within their own knowledge, or communicated by respectable authorities from their different counties.

They have received also from his Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Home Department, such returns as had been hitherto made to the circular letter written by him, by his Majesty's command, to the *Custodes Rotarum* and Sheriffs Depute in England and Scotland, desiring them to obtain meetings of the Magistrates for the purpose of procuring an account of the state of the late crop: but these returns are not as yet sufficiently numerous or complete to lead to any precise conclusion.

On the whole, however, the general information derived from the sources above-mentioned satisfied your Committee, that the crop of other sorts of grain than wheat has been upon the whole abundant; but that the produce of wheat has proved so far deficient, as to require the adoption of the speediest and most effectual measures for the remedy or alleviation of so great an evil. They were therefore of opinion, that they should best perform
their

their duty by directing their immediate attention to the consideration of such measures; and have, on that account, deferred for the present pursuing a detailed enquiry into the exact amount of such deficiency; but they propose to report the same more particularly to the House, when they shall have received such further information as may enable them to collect more fully the general opinion, upon a point which they are sensible it is impossible at any time to ascertain with any great degree of accuracy.

The first and most obvious mode of supplying this deficiency is, the importation of grain from foreign parts---and for the purpose of forming an opinion as to what may be the prospect of supply from thence, and the most expedient means to be adopted for procuring it, your Committee proceeded to examine such persons, from whose knowledge and experience in the trade of corn they could expect the best information. It appeared from their concurrent testimony, that, though the crop of wheat in the United States of America, and in the countries bordering upon the Mediterranean, was represented as abundant; and in the northern and eastern parts of Europe as not materially deficient; yet, as the old stock was much exhausted, and the demand great, the price, according to the last advices, was every where uncommonly high. But, though there was upon this point some difference of opinion, it appeared upon the whole very doubtful whether a supply to any considerable extent could be depended upon from foreign parts, whatever measures might be adopted. Your Committee next proceeded to enquire what measures, in the judgment of these persons, afforded the best probability of obtaining such a supply. They thought it right to bring distinctly under their consideration the alternative of leaving the whole care of such purchases to the executive government, who would (it was conceived) be in such case the only purchasers, and be publicly known to be so, or of leaving the same to the speculation of individual merchants, encouraged by a liberal bounty or importation, and by a public declaration on the part of government (as soon as such declaration shall be practicable) of the quantity which they may then have at their disposal in consequence of former orders, and of their intention to give no further orders for the purchase of corn, and to sell what may have been procured in limited quantities, and at the market price. It appeared to your Committee to be the preponderant opinion amongst those persons to whom this alternative was stated, that, upon the whole, the restoration of the trade in corn to its natural channel, with the additional encouragement of a bounty, was the most eligible mode of endeavouring to procure from foreign parts such supplies as those in markets might be found able to furnish. Your committee were further confirmed in this opinion by the information they received from some of their members, that there were merchants who had stated to them their readiness, under those circumstances, to engage in speculations to a large extent. Af-

ter a full consideration and discussion of this important point, your Committee were of opinion, "That it was expedient for the executive government to desist from making any further purchases of corn; and that a bounty should be granted upon the importation of certain sorts of grain into this country, for the encouragement of private speculation."

Your Committee next proceeded to the consideration of the amount and distribution of such bounty. They had been informed that, from the abundance of the crop of wheat in the countries bordering upon the Mediterranean, there might be a considerable disposal surplus in those markets; but that, from the high price of freight and insurance from those ports, and from the difficulty of procuring shipping to go thither in ballast, a larger bounty would be required to encourage private speculation in that quarter than in any other; they were therefore of opinion, that a bounty of twenty shillings *per* quarter, and a proportional bounty *per* barrel, should be given on any number of quarters of wheat, weighing not less than 440lb. avoirdupois, or on any number of barrels of flour, weighing not less than 196lb. avoirdupois, which shall be imported into Great Britain, from any port of Europe south of Cape Finisterre, or from any port in the Mediterranean, or in Africa, before the 31st day of August, 1796, until the quantity of such wheat and flour, taken together, shall equal 300,000 quarters.

They were further satisfied, upon the best information they could collect, that from the other parts of Europe, and from America, a bounty of 15s. *per* quarter upon a certain quantity of wheat, and of 10s. *per* quarter upon all exceeding it, would be sufficient to give a fair chance of procuring for the British markets a large proportion of whatever supply those countries might be expected to furnish beyond their own consumption: and they were therefore of opinion, that a bounty of fifteen shillings *per* quarter, and a proportional bounty *per* barrel, should be given on any number of quarters of wheat, weighing not less than 196 lb. avoirdupois, which shall be imported from all other parts of Europe, before the 31st day of August, 1796, until the quantity of such wheat and flour, taken together, shall equal 500,000 quarters. Your Committee were also of opinion, that a bounty of fifteen shillings *per* quarter, and a proportional bounty *per* barrel, should be given on any number of quarters of wheat, weighing not less than 440lb. avoirdupois, or on any number of barrels of flour, weighing not less than 196 lb. avoirdupois, which shall be imported from any of his Majesty's colonies in America, or from the United States, before the 31st of August, 1796; until the quantity of such wheat and flour, taken together, shall equal 500,000 quarters. Your Committee were also of opinion, that a bounty of ten shillings *per* quarter, and a proportional bounty *per* barrel, should be given on any number of quarters of wheat, weighing not less than 440lb. avoirdupois, or on any number of barrels

barrels of flour, weighing not less than 196 lb. avoirdupois, which shall be imported into Great Britain before the 31st day of August, 1796, and on which none of the before-mentioned bounties shall have been paid.

Your Committee being convinced that if a considerable quantity of Indian corn could be obtained (which from the abundance of that crop appeared not improbable) it would afford a material relief, were also of opinion, that a bounty of five shillings *per* quarter, and a proportional bounty *per* barrel, should be given on any number of quarters of Indian corn, or on any number of barrels of Indian meal, which shall be imported into Great Britain before the 31st day of August, 1796, until the quantity of such Indian corn and meal, taken together, shall equal 500,000 quarters. Your Committee were also of opinion, that a bounty of three shillings *per* quarter, and a proportional bounty *per* barrel, should be given on any number of quarters of Indian corn, or on any number of barrels of Indian meal, which shall be imported into Great Britain before the 31st day of August, 1796; and on which the before-mentioned bounty shall not have been paid.

Your Committee have some reason to believe, that there may appear such a deficiency in the crop of rye, as may lead to the application of similar measures for the encouragement of the importation of that species of grain, as have been recommended respecting wheat; but they do not yet consider their information upon that point as sufficient to authorize them, at the present moment, to report any opinion to that effect.

Your Committee have thought it incumbent upon them, humbly to suggest such measures as have hitherto appeared, in their judgment, the most likely to facilitate the procuring, without loss of time, in the least exceptionable manner, and on the least unreasonable terms, the largest supply of grain from foreign parts, which, in the present relative state of the markets, they can be expected to afford. It was particularly with a view to expedition that they have suggested the proposed plan of arranging the bounty. But they feel it at the same time their indispensable duty expressly to state, that they are far from entertaining an opinion that any supply by importation can be depended upon to such an amount as to remove the necessity of recurring to every other practicable and reasonable mode by which the present scarcity may be relieved; and particularly of attending to strict economy in the consumption of wheat and flour, and of promoting the substitution, to a certain extent, of other articles of food.

They intend to proceed immediately to the consideration of these and of other parts of this extensive and important subject; and will, with the permission of the House, report from time to time, such opinions as they may be enabled to form thereupon.

An ACCOUNT of the Total Net Produce paid into the Exchequer, of the Duties of Customs in England and Scotland; distinguishing (as far as possible) the Produce of every separate Article, the Duties on which shall have amounted to £.1,000, or more; in the Four Quarters ending the 10th Day of October 1795.

SPECIES of GOODS.	Net produce, subject to the Payments of Bounties and Management.		
Glass, Pearl and Pott	813	9	—
Sassaparilla	22,897	9	1
Sassafras	5,257	4	3
Sassafras, Undrest	1,524	8	2
Sassafras, Great	1,599	11	4
Sassafras, Turkey	11,101	7	7
Sassafras, White	1,744	13	—
Sassafras, Drawnought	4,336	17	8½
Sassafras	1,903	3	11½
Corn, Oats	1,063	12	8½
Wheat	1,089	17	7½
Almonds, Bitter	422	3	9
Almonds Succotrina	363	12	6
Benzoin	3,591	9	8
Borneo, Refined	1,315	16	3
Cassia Lignea	8,279	8	1½
Cortex Perse	1,140	17	4½
Cream of Tartar	1,142	1	4½
Ginseng	711	6	4
Juniper Berries	160	1	3½
Lard, Black	199	2	10
Manna	521	6	5½
Oil, perfumed	43	12	3
Sassafras	5,686	12	7
Sassafras	2,745	5	12
Sassafras Saturni	1,435	13	2
Sassafras	1,192	12	6
Sassafras Liquorice	3,719	12	6
Sassafras, Sassa	10,699	5	10
Sassafras, Sassa	2,208	4	8
Sassafras, Sassa	6,909	12	—½
Sassafras, Sassa	527	15	3
Sassafras, Sassa and Oranges	7,828	17	2½
Sassafras, Sassa	2,485	6	4½
Sassafras	5,412	4	3½
Almonds,			

Preceding Account continued.

SPECIES of GOODS.		Net Produce, subject to the Payments of Bounties and Management.		
Grocery.	Almonds, Jordan	4,777	13	1/2
	— not Jordan	1,308	—	5
	Aniseed	583	15	20
	Cinnamon			
	Cloves			
	Cocoa	1,799	8	2 1/2
	Coffee	33,725	7	3 1/2
	Currants	91,040	19	3 1/2
	Figs	5,125	20	5 1/2
	Ginger	4,274	7	9 1/2
	Mace	267	6	4
	Nutmegs	651	1	5
	Pepper	28,143	1	9
	Pimento	2,261	19	5
	Prunes	1,201	11	6
	— Denia	22,387	4	1 1/2
	— Lexia	18,981	19	2 1/2
	— Lipari	4,417	7	3 1/2
	— Smyrna	11,943	19	3
	— Solis	25,271	23	4 1/2
	Rice	2,723	9	2 1/2
Hair, Hurdle	Sago	1,270	3	9
	Sugar, Brown	1,119,586	18	1
	Tea	142,222	17	7
	Human	446	17	4
	Clap	1,147	4	—
	Straw	1,639	—	5 1/2
	Hemp, Rough	267	3 1/2	1
	Hides, Indian	85,204	5	6 1/2
	Loth			
	Hides, Ox or Cow	6,397	5	10
Iron, Bar	Incle, Wrot.	1,457	1	8
	Cast	1,869	4	5
	Kelp	105,684	14	1 1/2
	Cambricks	730	3	7 1/2
	Canvas, Hessens	440	13	1 1/2
	— Spruce	854	12	4
	Damk. Tabg. Sila.	18,994	13	10 1/2
	Draper Napk. Sila.	11,375	—	5
	Drilling	1,173	11	5 1/2
	Germany, Narrow	317	7	—
Linen	Lawns Sila. not Holland, Whited	3,391	17	—
	— Broad, above 22 1/2	29,544	13	2 1/2
	— above 31 1/2	606	16	—
	— above 36	21,551	9	1 1/2
	— Narrow	2,063	5	5
	— Towelg. and Napkg.	6,793	16	2 1/2
	Manufactured Articles of India	4,996	17	9 1/2
	Matr, Russia	1,139	18	—
		2,306	12	2 1/2
		1,161	3	3 1/2

Preceding Account continued.

SPECIES of GOODS.		Net Produce, subject to the Payments of Bounties and Managements.		
Oil, Ordinary	.	13,717	3	7 $\frac{1}{2}$
— Sallad	.	2,400	15	5
— Train	.	796	13	9 $\frac{1}{2}$
Paper	.	2,250	16	2 $\frac{1}{2}$
Pictures	.	7,348	8	4 $\frac{1}{2}$
Piece Goods of India	{ Calicoes	33,689	19	8 $\frac{1}{2}$
	{ Muslins	90,559	4	9 $\frac{1}{2}$
	{ Nankeens	5,723	13	7 $\frac{1}{2}$
	{ Prohibited	16,421	10	11 $\frac{1}{2}$
Salt Petre	.	883	18	9
Seeds, Clover	.	1,029	7	10 $\frac{1}{2}$
Shells Mother of Pearl	.			
Silk, { Raw	.	22,456	18	—
	{ Bengal, Raw	73,811	15	2
	{ China, Raw	14,312	—	10
	{ Thrown	101,588	13	—
	{ Bear, Black	3,013	1	—
	{ Beaver	923	9	— $\frac{1}{2}$
	{ Calf, Undressed	2,135	15	—
	{ Tanned	3 2	2	— $\frac{1}{2}$
	{ Deer, in Hair	3,872	1	—
	{ Fox, Ordinary	411	14	3 $\frac{1}{2}$
	{ Goat, Tanned	622	15	—
	{ Kid, Undressed	2,370	15	9 $\frac{1}{2}$
	{ Martin	273	16	— $\frac{1}{2}$
	{ Mink	92	10	7 $\frac{1}{2}$
	{ Otter	321	19	—
	{ Raccoon			
	{ Seal			
	{ Wolf	734	2	3
Snuff	.	392	14	10
Spirits, Brandy	.	13,858	11	— $\frac{1}{2}$
— Geneva	.	14,278	—	7 $\frac{1}{2}$
— Rum	.	31,612	—	10 $\frac{1}{2}$
Stones, Blocks of Marble	.	596	3	8
Tar	.	5,858	5	5 $\frac{1}{2}$
Thread, Sifters	.	793	12	—
Tobacco	.	242,494	3	—
Tow	.	2,334	3	9
Turpentine	.	5,008	3	11 $\frac{1}{2}$
Wax, Bees	.	7,405	7	9 $\frac{1}{2}$
	{ Canary	1,326	5	5
	{ French	11,107	6	4 $\frac{1}{2}$
	{ Madeira	10,208	18	8
	{ Portugal	429,936	8	7 $\frac{1}{2}$
	{ Rhenish	1,259	6	3
	{ Spanish	87,539	6	2 $\frac{1}{2}$
Wood, Barks	.	3,500	19	3 $\frac{1}{2}$
— Batters	.	9,789	9	8 $\frac{1}{2}$
— Boards, Paling	.	1,166	9	8 $\frac{1}{2}$
				Boards,

Preceding Account continued.

SPECIES of GOODS.		Net Produce, subject to the Payments of Bounties and Managements.		
Wood.	Boards, Scale	980	7	9
	— Waincot	212	8	8½
	Deals	138,623	6	2½
	— Ends	4,203	10	10½
	Lath Wood	2,665	8	3
	Mafts	6,113	3	9½
	Plank, Oak	4,574	—	—
	Staves	8,774	7	10½
	Timber, Fir	61,471	18	7½
	— Oak	867	17	5½
Yarn.	Ufers	1,617	1	10½
	Waincot Logs	1,873	14	6½
	Mohair	1,326	7	8
Subsidies.	Allum	1,944	12	7
	Coals	92,902	1	—
	Indigo	6,861	15	8½
	Lead	30,014	—	8½
	Salt, Rock	4,350	6	5
	Skins, Beaver	2,806	6	—
	Tin	4,965	19	7½
Carried Coastways	Other Subsidies	6,584	18	7½
	Coals	616,811	8	9
	Corn	2,720	16	2
	Stones and Slates	16,278	11	6
Remitted from the Plantations	Wine	872	18	9½
		22,056	3	10½
Returns from the Inspector of Corn		554	2	9
Returns from Mr. Needham, Receiver of Fines and Forfeitures		1,455	6	10½
Returns from Mr. Williams, for Wines sold by the Excise		2,114	4	5
Received from the Receivers General of the Counties, on Account of Window Money		206,324	8	2
Produce of condemned Tobacco		1,267	12	3
Sundry Small Articles		160,226	4	1½
Total — £.		4,749,464	13	8

Total Net Receipt

— —

£.

4,749,464	13	8
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CHARGE.

DISCHARGE.

Net produce, after deducting Drawbacks
repaid, subject to the Payment of boun-
ties, management, &c. &c.

4,749,464 13 8

- By Bounties
- Re-payment on Over Entries, &c. &c.
- Charges of Management
- Payments per Order of the Barons of
— Exchequer in Scotland, applicable to
the Civil List
- Payments into the Exchequer
- Cash paid in the several Ports of the
Kingdom, in Bounties for raising Sea-
men, by Acts of 35th of the King

Total Discharge

£.

693,286	1	8½
51,508	12	7
448,334	11	9½
31,161	2	6½
3,412,255	6	8½
112,918	18	4
4,749,464	13	8

THOMAS IRVING,
Inspector General of the
Imports and Exports of Great Britain

An ACCOUNT of the Total Net Produce paid into the Exchequer, of the Duties arising from the STAMP REVENUE, that have amounted to £. 1,000 or more, in the Four Quarters ended the 10th of *October*, 1795.

			£.	s.	d.
Consolidated Duties	—	—	743,064	11	5
Insurance	—	—	129,389	11	—
Burials, &c.	—	—	3,068	15	6
Hats	—	—	6,168	13	8
Plate	—	—	25,286	12	5
Post Horse Duty, &c.	—	—	193,586	6	2
Medicine	—	—	11,820	8	7
Game	—	—	40,425	12	3
Attornies	—	—	25,639	19	2
Pawnbrokers	—	—	3,892	16	11
Perfumery	—	—	2,714	—	—
Scotch Judges	—	—	1,517	10	9
Additional Game, 1791	—	—	16,023	9	2
Bills of Exchange	—	—	124,151	2	10
Receipts, 1791	—	—	42,758	6	—
Attornies, 1794	—	—	16,195	13	6
Hair Powder Certificates, 1795	—	—	187,085	15	—
Additional Stamps, 1795	—	—	8,713	15	8
Receipts, 1795	—	—	4,204	—	—
Sea Policies, 1795	—	—	16,056	19	—
Apprentice Duty	—	—	6,140	—	3
£.			1,609,906	19	3

Stamp Office,
Nov. 5th, 1795.

ROBT. THOMPSON, *for* Compt.

An ACCOMPT of the Total Produce of the Duties of CUSTOMS, EXCISE, STAMPS, and INCIDENTS, respectively, for One Year, ended the 10th Day of *October* 1795; distinguishing (as far as possible) in each Branch, the Produce on every separate Article, the Duties on which have amounted to ONE THOUSAND POUNDS, or more, in the Four Quarters of the said Year; *viz.*

The Total Produce of the Duties of Customs for One Year, ended the 10th Day of October 1795, as <i>per</i> Accompt (A.)	3,412,255	6	8½
Ditto of the Excise for One Year, ended Ditto (exclusive of £.586,839. 12s. the Produce of the Annual Malt Duties) as <i>per</i> Accompt (B)	8,739,013	11	9¾
Ditto of the Stamp Duties for One Year, ended Ditto, as <i>per</i> Accompt (C)	1,609,906	19	
Ditto of Incidents at the Receipt of the Exchequer for One Year, ended Ditto, as <i>per</i> Accompt (D.)	1,940,331	13	—¾
	<hr/>		
	15,701,507	10	10

Memorandum.

To the above Sum of £.3,412,255. 6s. 8½d. the Produce of the Duties of Customs, should be added £.112,918. 18s. 4d. the Amount of the Payments in the several Ports for Bounties for raising Seamen, pursuant to Acts of the 35th of the King.

Memorandum.

In the Sum of £.1,940,331. 13s. —¾d. stated as the Amount of Incidents at the Exchequer, is included £.24,175. 12s. 2d. being the Amount of Imprests and other Monies paid within the above Period.

Presented, pursuant to an Act of the 27th Year of his present Majesty's Reign, the 10th Day of November 1795, by

GEORGE ROSE;

An ACCOUNT of the Total Produce paid into the Exchequer of the Duties under the Head of INCIDENTS; distinguishing (as far as possible) in each Branch, the Produce on every separate Article, the Duties on which shall have amounted to One thousand Pounds, or more, in the Four Quarters ended the 10th October, 1795.

	£.	s.	d.
Letter Money per Week	156,000	—	—
Salt	388,361	13	$\frac{5}{2}$
Seizures	30,817	—	$\frac{1}{2}$
Letter Money, 1760	269,029	18	1
6d Deduction on Pensions	41,626	—	—
1 Sh. D ^c — on Salaries	31,990	17	5
Houses and Windows, 1766	331,505	15	$6\frac{1}{2}$
Inhabited Houses, 1779	144,203	19	$4\frac{1}{2}$
Hawkers and Pedlars	2,749	18	10
Hackney Coaches and Chairs	11,000	—	—
D ^c — — — 1784	12,800	—	—
Male Servants, 1785	87,618	17	$9\frac{1}{2}$
£. 10 per Cent.	94,415	5	$2\frac{1}{2}$
First Fruits	4,305	14	$1\frac{1}{2}$
Tenths	9,959	3	$1\frac{1}{2}$
Horses	110,860	1	$11\frac{1}{2}$
4 Wheeled Carriages	148,021	12	$1\frac{1}{2}$
2 Wheeled D ^c	36,455	—	$8\frac{1}{2}$
Alienation Duty	1,924	8	8
£.	1,913,645	6	$1\frac{1}{2}$
The Produce of Duties under £. 1,000 with- in the same Period, amounts to	2,510	14	$9\frac{1}{2}$
	1,916,156	—	$10\frac{3}{4}$

	£.	s.	d.
Money paid by Thomas Lumley, for Money over received by him on an Annuity granted in 1746	25	—	—
D ^o by Charles Long, Esq. for Interest on £. 187,000 for Annuities	8,053	13	11
D ^o by John Charlton, late Agent to a Corps of Invalids	271	—	—
D ^o by Mess. Fludyer, Maitland, and C ^o , on Account of Cloathing sold for the Use of the Public	7,000	—	—
D ^o D ^o D ^o D ^o	5,706	—	6
D ^o by Charles Goddard, Esq. Agent for Upper Canada, to the 31 st Dec 1793	2,553	16	—
D ^o by William Bradshaw Clinton, on account of an Annuity granted in 1746	30	—	—
Imprest Money repaid by the right hon. Sir Gilbert Elliot, late Treasurer of the Navy	236	2	1
D ^o by John Dalley, Esq; Secretary to the Commissioners appointed for enquiring into the Emoluments of the Officers of the Customs	12	—	8½
D ^o by Abraham D'Aubant, Esq. late Chief Engineer in North America	297	18	11½
	24,175	12	2
	1,916,156	—	10½
Exchequer, the 6th Day of November, 1795.	£.	1,940,331	13 — ¼

Exd. 48

GRENVILLE.

